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ABSTRACT

This program was developed and implemented in a third- and fourth-grade classroom setting (with the teacher's support) to develop reading skills in below-grade level students. This was also a Specific Learning Disabled Inclusion Model classroom. The objectives for the program were for 18 of 24 students to increase their oral reading skills by at least 6 months, increase their reading fluency by one level; and to achieve at least a 3.5 out of 5 on a Likert reader attitude scale. The intervention program used a combination approach including phonics, context clues, sight words, and interactive vocabulary in a contextual, literature-based environment. A love and enjoyment of literacy was fostered concurrently with the development of the students' reading skills. Two of the three program's objectives were met with the target group improving dramatically in all areas. Contains 50 references; appendixes include a writer-created teacher survey, fluency checklist, attitude/concept survey, game and parent/teacher/principal permission forms. (Author/RS)

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DEVELOPING READING SKILLS IN BELOW-GRADE LEVEL STUDENTS USING A COMBINATION APPROACH IN A LITERATURE-BASED ENVIRONMENT

by

Linda N. Brocato

A Final Report assignment submitted to the faculty of the
Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education
of Nova Southeastern University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Science

June 1998

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Abstract

Developing Reading Skills in Below-Grade Level Students Using a Combination Approach in a Literature-Based Environment
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Descriptors: Elementary Education / Third and Fourth Grade/Inclusion Model/ Literacy/Reading Skills/Reading Strategies/ Below-Grade Level/ Specific Learning Disabled Readers/Educadable Mentally Handicapped Readers/Classroom Intervention/Volunteer/Combination Approach/ Explicit Phonics in a Contextual Environment/Context Clues/ Sight-Word Vocabulary/ Picture Clues/Breaking Big Words Into Little Words/Interactive Vocabulary/ Literature-Based/ Whole Language/Fluency/Attitude/ Concept as a Reader Survey/ Oral Reading/Creative Writing/Active Participation/Reading Incentives/Motivation/Parental Involvement/Love of Literacy/Stimulating Reading Environment/Trade Books/Teacher Survey/Fluency Checklist/Interactive Games and Activities/Author Study/Art

This program was developed and implemented in a third and fourth classroom setting (with the teacher's support) to develop reading skills in below-grade level students. This was also a Specific Learning Disabled Inclusion Model classroom. The objectives for the program were for 18 of 24 students to increase their oral reading skills by at least 6 months; increase their reading fluency by one level; and to achieve at least a 3.5 out of 5 on a Likert reader attitude scale. The intervention program used a combination approach including phonics, context clues, sight words, and interactive vocabulary in a contextual, literature-based environment. A love and enjoyment of literacy was fostered concurrently with the development of the students' reading skills. Two of the three program's objectives were met with the target group improving dramatically in all areas. Appendixes include a writer-created teacher survey, fluency checklist, attitude/concept survey, game and parent/teacher/principal permission forms.

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. When it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of others in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

Linda N. Brocato
student's signature

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Practicum title Developing Reading Skills in Below-Grade Level Students Using a Combination Approach in a Literature-Based Environment

Student's name Linda N. Brocato Completion date May 22, 1998

Project site Quail Hollow Elem.

Mentor's name Jane G. Comer (*print*) Jane G. Comer (*signature*)

Mentor's position at the site Reading Specialist Phone # (813) 929-1924

Comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

Mrs. Brocato consistently worked with below grade level students and their teacher, Her practicum provided a much-needed service for our school and we were fortunate that she chose our school site for her project.

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Chapter I

Purpose

The elementary school involved in this project was located in a rural community in the southeastern part of the United States. The school was located in one of the fastest growing areas of the state and had experienced more than 700 new students since 1990. It was projected to continue growing during the coming years.

None of this major growth and housing development existed when the current principal came to the school 12 years ago. The result of the housing boom was obvious. The 1997-98 school year began with 1,009 children in a school designed to house 600. Each day, 15 school buses and 250 cars driven by parents rumbled down the crumbling boulevard. The road had no sidewalks, shoulders or crossing guard. There was no other route to the school. Nearly half the students attended class in 16 portable classrooms; the trailers crowded the school campus. If it rained at lunch, it was tough on the children, because they got wet. They darted into the main building to eat. It seemed there was always someone in the cafeteria. The school day began at 9:50 a.m. and ended at 3:35 p.m. To shepherd more than 1,000 children through the lunch line, the midday meal was served from 11:00 a.m. until 2:15 p.m.

A new elementary school opened in the fall of the 1997-1998 school year, but did not relieve the target school's overcrowding dilemma. This new elementary school had a designed capacity of 765 students. The construction budget was $6,600,000. In addition, the School Board set aside approximately $1,200,000 for the purchase of classroom furniture, equipment, and computers. The opening of another new school, near a middle class subdivision, in the fall of 1998 should cut attendance nearly in half in the target school.

The school district borrowed money to build this new school because voters turned down a sales tax increase to build schools nearly two years ago. If a school impact fee had been in place in this county, the new housing subdivisions would have paid a significant portion of the new school's cost. The school district proposed just that. It wanted the county commission to adopt an impact fee of $968 per single-family home, a figure developed by a consultant from a large, local university. This had not been settled.

The county school board had for many years adhered to a neighborhood school policy. Members of the School Board believed that, when possible, children should attend the school nearest their home. The county area where the school was located was served by a total of four elementary schools. These schools had a combined membership of more than 3,800 students in grades pre-kindergarten through five. Attendance boundaries of all existing schools were changed in order to create an attendance boundary for the school that opened in the fall of 1997. The committee appointed to create the recommended new boundaries was chaired by the director of Planning and Construction, and had members that represented school administrators, transportation, and exceptional student education programs. In addition, the Director of Planning and Construction met with the Parent Advisory Councils from all the schools affected by the proposed changes and discussed the new boundaries that later went to the School Board for adoption. No boundary changes were recommended for any of the middle schools and high schools.

The rural atmosphere where the school was located invited many urban dwellers to move from the city to the country. The pastures that allowed cattle to graze along the two lane state roads were replaced with a major corporation's development and a four-lane highway. The socio-economic status of the community ranged from homes on several golf and county club estates to homes in middle class subdivisions to homes in shabby trailers. This accounted for the socio-economic range of the school's population that fluctuated from low to high. With the boundary change, came the addition of children from a middle income subdivision, and a decrease in the percentage of students receiving free or reduced price lunches from 37.2 percent in 1996-97 to 33 percent in 1997-98.

The atmosphere at the school, despite its overcrowding dilemma was orderly, caring, and creative.. Therefore, improving student performance continued to be a focus for the 1997-98 school year. The Stanford Achievement Test results of incoming students were analyzed during preplanning weeks. Specific areas of need were identified and focus groups were formed to assist students in targeted areas. Teacher training was provided to help teachers recognize characteristics of and identify students having learning disabilities. The formal process for referring students for special placement was reviewed with the faculty. An emphasis on academic achievement was expanded to include award celebrations for students each quarter. Students received academic patches, pins, and certificates in recognition of their academic accomplishments.

Special efforts to improve the learning environment were made during the 1996-97 school year. The media center was monitored closely to insure the valuable media time was not interrupted. A conscientious effort was made to schedule school activities in alternative locations which allowed the media center to be open and accessible. A plan to increase student time in the media center for academic and recreational purposes was developed and implemented. The plan allowed for whole class check outs, special read aloud sessions, and provided for creative ways to share new media materials. As a result of this plan, the monthly average circulation increased by 58 percent.

Teachers increased personal contacts with parents in a variety of ways. Teaching teams held evening parent conferences to accommodate parents' work schedules. Teachers were given compensation time for this additional time. Two open houses were held during the year. Many teachers made regular phone calls to keep parents apprised of students' progress. Newsletters from the classrooms kept parents informed of classroom events and news. Communication was also facilitated through daily reports, school calendars, electronic mail, the school's information line, and the school's marquee. The school network was utilized by parents, students, faculty, and staff. The school was the first in the district to set up an electronic mail system for parents. Parents brought in a disk and the school gave them the software for Windows, or a Macintosh Program for their computers. The parents could access the school's Community Bulletin Board or they could send an electronic mail message to staff members. There were monthly calendars distributed to parents and phone numbers that parents called to update the weekly menu or special events for the week. During the 1996-97 school year, 60 families accessed the school via a modem to the school's electronic mail system. A school electronic mail system was also established to share school information such as the faculty handbook, district warehouse catalog, and quarterly student grading criteria. On a Parent Survey, these efforts to communicate revealed that 82 percent of the parents randomly surveyed were satisfied overall with the school. More than 70 percent of the parents agreed that the school provided the students with the variety of programs and subjects necessary to meet their needs. More than 80 percent of the parents also agreed that the school was willing to meet with parents about their concerns.

During the 1996-97 school year, student performance on the Florida Writing Assessment Grade four showed that the school's average was 2.5 on a scale from zero to six. The district's average score was 2.6. On the Stanford Achievement Test (Grade four) in total reading the percentage of students who scored above the national median/middle school was 39. The percentage for the district was 47.

Improvement in communication among administrators, teachers, and staff was a focus for the 1996-97 school year and continued to be a focus during the 1997-98 school year. The school's electronic mail system was an effective vehicle to assist in this effort. Messages and announcements were posted on electronic mail as were minutes from meetings. In-service opportunities were posted and information was shared about in-services. Participation in staff development opportunities was encouraged for all employees. A special form was developed and implemented to formally invite administrators to unique classroom programs.

The school was a safe place for both teachers and students, according to the low number of incidents of violence, weapons, violations, vandalism, substance abuse, and harassment on the bus, on campus, and at school-sponsored activities. This school had an almost perfect record, with only one incident, compared to 1,005 incidents for the district, and 227,528 incidents for the state. In addition, the school administration and the PTA had a preventive attitude toward keeping the children entrusted to them safe. Therefore, the school was a member of the Save-

A-Kid Child Identification Program and Community Child Watch. This program was optional with each elementary school in the school district. The school provided all of its second grade students an opportunity to participate in the county's Sheriff's Office Save-A-Kid program. The Save-A-Kid program involved a fingerprinted card and a laminated ID card that included a school photo and personal information about each child which could be used by a parent in an emergency situation as a form of identification. A booklet that explained the program in detail went home with all second grade students prior to the actual fingerprinting day. This program was similar to many that were available at a considerable cost, some as high as $5.00 per child. The Save-A-Kid Program was available at no cost to the second graders. The Sheriff's Office charged only 25 cents per student, which was paid by the Parent Teacher Association.

Each full time equivalent student at this targeted school received $127.96 from the Education Enhancement Trust Funds (Lottery) in the 1996-97 school year. The school received a total of $133,345.32 for the year and the district received a total of $8,339,187.98. In the 1997-98 school year each child received $10.00 from the lottery. From this allotment, staff development received $5,000.00, The Early Success Program received $1500.00 and the Accelerated Reading Program received $3500.00 for books. This was a fair distribution of funds because the majority of the students in the school ranged between the third and fourth grade reading level.

School business partners were recognized at the academic celebrations. Many of the school business partners also participated in the Great American Teach-In. The school grant contact person was the Reading Specialist. She gave assistance and suggestions to the faculty on how to write grants and encourage partnerships.

A major endeavor for the 1996-97 school year was to establish a resource room which would house school purchased materials in a central location and promote sharing of the materials. The resource room was established and a materials' database was created to facilitate planning and increase use of the materials. The resource room was well stocked with games and books that were readily available to the teachers to enhance the curriculum.

The trend in the last five years for the district and the school was to move toward a continuous progress model. This model used a nontraditional, nongraded system of grouping which put kindergarten, first, and second graders together in a primary "house," and third, fourth, and fifth graders together in an intermediate "house." Teams of students and teachers stayed together over a period of time with most primary children (ages five to eight remaining on the same team of teachers for three years before moving to an intermediate team (ages eight to 11), where they also spent three years with the same team of teachers. This meant that approximately 125 students or more remained together as members of a continuous progress house giving students, parents, and teachers a sense of belonging and continuity. The 1997-98 school year was the first year that all the classes were multi-aged, which resulted in a higher morale for all teachers.

The curriculum was delivered via integrated themes. Active learning opportunities included cooperative learning strategies. Moving to a continuous progress model incorporated both curriculum and organizational changes. In this model, grouping was flexible. Students of the same age worked together and students who shared a specific need worked together. Grouping decisions within the team were made based on the needs of each student, rather than upon the grade or age of the student. The implementation plan for this purpose was left up to the individual schools and teaching teams according to the readiness level of the staff and students' needs. Portfolio assessment was fully implemented along with a variety of other assessments. The school received recognition in several areas during the 1996-97 school year. The school received $3,000 from the District School Board for winning second place in energy conservation for the school district. The cafeteria staff was awarded the Super School Award by the Florida School Food Service Association for their efforts and programs during National School Lunch Week. During the 1997-98 school year, the cafeteria became computerized. It was important for each child to understand the automated procedures. All students received an identification number and memorized it, whether they paid full price, a reduced price, or received free meals or only bought lunch periodically. Parent/teacher involvement in this process was very important.

The students are required to use these identification numbers throughout their future school years in this county.

As an incentive to get students to read more books, the principal agreed to kiss a pig. Students reached the goal of 25,000 books read in February 1997, and the principal kissed the pig. The principal was very involved in the daily activities of the school, including welcoming parents to the Around the World Lunches for National School Lunch Week, participating in the Halloween Parade, and the Great American Teach-In.

For the 1997-98 school reading challenge of 30,000 books read, the assistant principal agreed to kiss a boa constrictor that visited the school annually. One of the incentives used to motivate the students to read was the Pizza Hut Book-It Program. The students' progress charts were displayed on the entrance wall into the school. Also, to encourage writing in the school, an Expressionist Contest with categories such as Poetry Winner, Essay Winner, and Illustration Winner was held to motivate the students to become writers, as well as readers. The winners' names were displayed on a chart. Another way that literacy was encouraged in the school was through The Literacy Committee of Delta Kappa Gamma Society International. This group sponsored a Read-Aloud Day which encouraged an adult to read aloud to a child and a child to read aloud to an adult.

Another exciting venture was the school's participation in the French/ American back-to-back program. The program involved hosting a class of French elementary students for a period of three weeks. Students lived with the school's students and experienced life in the southeastern part of the United States, and even attended school with their American counterparts. Support from local businesses and parent involvement made the program successful. Over the summer of 1997, 11 students from this targeted school visited their French friends for a period of three weeks.

Students, faculty, and staff brought much deserved recognition to the school. During the 1996-97 school year, two former students of the school became school volunteers. They received the J. C. Penny's Golden Award (Youth Award) which resulted in a $1,000 donation to the school. The award recognized outstanding beginning teachers nationwide. The physical education teacher from the school won the Florida Schoolyard/Keep Your County Beautiful Mini-Grant. An area in front of the school was developed featuring low maintenance plants and outdoor seating in a natural setting. The students did exceptionally well at the district science fair with five students placing first, one second, one third, and one fourth. One teacher was named Project Learning Tree's "Teacher of the Year." Project Learning Tree was started in 1973 by the American Forest Institute and the Western Regional Environmental Education Council. Project Learning Tree has been under continual revision by scientists, educators, and businesses to provide unbiased, pro-learning environmental education which promotes a "How to think, not What to think" philosophy. Also, the Reading Specialist was notified that her grant for additional technology money was funded; as a result, the school received three Electronic Mates for students' use and check out. The school had much to celebrate and appreciate.

The school's outstanding volunteer program received the Golden School Award 10 years in a row. This award required a school to have twice the number of volunteer hours as students enrolled. The 4,000 hours given to the school by its volunteers were much higher than the requirement of twice the number of hours per student in a year. The volunteers at this school also met the criteria of the Golden School Award. Staff training programs were implemented in which 80 percent of the school staff participated during the school year. The school's positive approach was also conveyed to its volunteers throughout the Volunteer Program Handbook that stated ways that volunteers could help at the elementary school level. These included advice for the volunteers in the role of a mentor, five steps for a successful tutoring session, 99 ways to help a student feel successful, and the heart of the volunteer program which was to "smile and recognize every success no matter how small" (Quail Hollow Elementary School, 1997, p.5).

The school recognized its volunteers by holding an Appreciation Breakfast each year. Each volunteer received a mug displaying the school logo with a "Made a Difference" slogan. The staff also nominated a volunteer of the year. In the 1996-97 school year, a Disabled Vietnam Veteran and a big supporter of the school, was chosen.

For two consecutive years, the school was awarded the Five Star School Award from the Florida State Department of Education for exemplary community involvement. This award was given to schools throughout the state that demonstrated outstanding efforts working with their Advisory Councils, Business Partnerships, Volunteer Programs, and Family Involvement Endeavors.

The Five Star School Award Criteria also required student community service. The school provided opportunities to students for service learning that focused on an identified community need. During Thanksgiving and Christmas, students brought canned goods to the school to be distributed to needy families throughout the community. Turkeys and baskets of food made by the children were given to needy families in the school and in the local community. In the school, 50 percent of the students were involved in community activities.

The ABC program, an acronym for Assist-Belief-Care, was a county-wide district program to help needy families. The school was a part of this program. The teachers who contribute to this benevolent fund believed that the school's population of children and their families were like their extended family. A payroll deduction system was in place to take money out of the teachers' salaries who were a part of this program. One use of the fund was for teachers to "adopt" needy children, as secret friends for birthdays and Christmas. These needy children were then given presents on these special occasions. The fund was also used to provide eye glasses for children whose families could not afford them. Parents could also become a part of this community effort. The parents, in collaboration with the teachers, were given a list of students identified as needing clothing. The teachers sent a letter home to the parents of the identified students asking for permission to assist their children and for the children's clothing sizes. This was done discreetly, so the families were not embarrassed.

The school's Parent Teacher Association (PTA) received the Florida PTA Achievement Award for outstanding programs and newsletters. The title of the Parent Teacher Association newsletter was Progress Through Action. This name was appropriate because the school and the parents worked hard to build a bridge of unity. The new PTA president for the 1997-98 school year was a teacher employed at the school. The advantage of having a teacher as a PTA president was her daily involvement with the students, faculty, staff, administration and parents. She had a first hand understanding of the school's needs and what a parent/teacher team could do to improve the lives of the children in this targeted school. She also had a very committed and inspired Executive Board. The PTA designated the fourth Thursday of the month PTA Day. In addition, the PTA General Assembly held meetings on the evening of the fourth Thursday each month. To observe that day, the teachers were permitted to wear their special PTA tee shirts to school. The PTA also provided special treats, such as popcorn and snow cones, to the students on PTA Day. The objective was for the children to return to their homes on PTA day and encourage their parents to attend the

PTA meeting. Attendance was also encouraged at the two open houses by offering a pizza dinner on the one evening designated for the primary students (kindergarten, one, two, three) and another evening designated for the intermediate students (three, four, five). The parents were encouraged to purchase Pizza Packs and eat at school before or after they visited their child's or children's classroom(s). The school recruited 380 PTA members, which included 45 staff members who joined before the first day of school. Other successful PTA meetings during the 1997-98 school year were built around themes such as Foods That Motivate Children. This theme activity was set up with five different stations in the media center, each with a different cooking activity. All parents rotated with their children about every 10 minutes to a different station. The children and the parents had a great time participating in this fun event. The Magic of Reading was the theme of another excellent PTA program which involved the use of magic, comedy, and audience participation. Important messages were woven into the presentation to excite the children about the wonders of reading. Some subjects included reading for pleasure, reading to learn a new task, and using the imagination and visualization while reading.

The money raised for the PTA was spent on things that benefited all of the students either directly or indirectly. In the 1996-97 school year the PTA raised more than $10,000. That money went to many different areas in the school. Several large pieces of equipment were purchased, including a new, extra-large die cut machine and several new dies, a snow-cone machine and a cart for the popcorn machine. Hand mixers were purchased for the cafeteria, drying racks for art projects were purchased for the art department, new music stands and a snare drum stand were purchased for the music department, and a new Compact Disc player was purchased for the Physical Education Department. Books for reading running records were purchased for the Reading Specialist and money was given to the media center for an author's birthday party program. The PTA purchased the picnic tables and benches, as well as some plants, that enhanced the landscape in the front of the school. Each year, the PTA supplied refreshments and supplies for the school parties held several times during the year. The Parent Teacher Association's motto of "Helping Hands Get Involved" was not just a slogan, but a united effort to provide the school with a strong support system between the home and the school.

Since the school was painted annually and was neatly landscaped, it looked a lot younger than its 22 years. It was evident that the staff from the custodian to the principal took pride in its neat and orderly appearance. Even with the overcrowding situation, the school preserved its playground. Inside the school building, the brightly colored displays and bulletin boards welcomed all children, parents, and volunteers. A large logo of the school was set in mosaic tiles in the middle of the sparkling clean floor. The office staff was friendly, courteous and knowledgeable. The staff offices were conveniently located at the entrance of the school building to provide information and directions to children, parents, and volunteers. Educational opportunities were offered to families at the school, such as a lending library to parents on parenting skills. Focus/discussion/support groups on topics such as drug awareness, safety, violence prevention were offered to families. The guidance counselor referred parents in need to outside agents and the proper agencies for families that could not afford to pay. The ABC School Fund was used to help families in this way, also.

The School Advisory Council met a minimum of eight times per year. On the average, 80 percent of its members were in attendance and a minimum of 50 percent attendance was required by each member. The annual presentation of The School Improvement Plan was given to the school community after public notice to all stakeholders through school flyers and the large outdoor marquee. Evidence of ongoing training and/or development of The School Advisory Council included the School Improvement Plan. This plan reflected one new idea that involved the community in its implementation. In the 1996-97 school year, the School Advisory Council participated in the development and/or interpretation of the needs assessment data. Teachers, parents, and community businesses were all part of this Advisory Council. The meetings were open to anyone to attend.

Twelve area businesses joined together to promote and reward children for exceptional attendance. The average daily attendance for the school was 95 percent. The children were rewarded through an Attendance Award Incentive.

There were two levels and two colors that represented perfect attendance and outstanding attendance for one or two quarters. The school promoted two awards because the 100 percent attendance award encouraged children to come to school, even if they were ill. Some of the area businesses that worked in cooperation with this targeted school to reward children were Burger King, McDonald's, Subway, Denny's, and Shoney's.

Along with the tremendous growth at the school, new positions were created. Therefore, in the 1997-98 school year, many new faces appeared on the faculty and staff. Also, familiar faces shifted to different teams or positions. The teachers' mobility at the school was approximately 20 percent of new teachers for the 1997-98 school year. Some teachers left for a variety of reasons such as pregnancies, transfers to another school, and husbands transferring to another state or area.

A new program called "Rocking Readers" was implemented in the 1997-98 school year in the media center. This program targeted kindergarten through second grade levels. "Rocking Reader" was a county wide volunteer reading buddies program. It had been successful at other schools in the district. It consisted of a one-on-one pairing of a retired senior citizen, 55 and over, and a child for an hour of reading. The teacher identified the set time each week and the volunteers read to the child, colored sheets, shared stories and gave appropriate greeting cards during the year. This significant other adult helped each individual child's self-esteem and love of reading. The majority of senior citizens who read with the children were from a large, neighborhood church near the school. Two additional new programs to enhance reading instruction began during the 1997-98 school year. They were the Accelerated Reader Program for kindergarten through fifth grade levels and the Early Success Program primarily for second grade. The Accelerated Reader Program was one of the ways the reading specialist motivated students to read more and select better quality books. The Accelerated Reader was a simple program of selecting a book, reading the book, and taking a test on the computer to earn points. Incentives for the points were accumulated by the students. Staff training was implemented to insure the success of these programs. In cooperation with this program, the media specialist labeled the shelves of accelerated reading books, so the students could easily identify their levels. The Reading Specialist also distributed copies of the Accelerated Reader's reading list to three county libraries which included one library outside the county of the school. Parents were reminded to find Accelerated Reader books to bring home from these county libraries.

To help students who experienced difficulty with reading in grade two, the school began using para-professionals to implement the Houghton Mifflin Early Success program for the first time in the 1997-98 school year. The Early Success Program was a special program to accelerate students' literacy growth with small-group intervention lessons that supported and extended classroom instruction.

Leveled-text story books, letter cards with plastic trays, and story summaries all provided daily work in reading, writing, and working with words. The media specialist at the school labeled the shelves of the easy reading book category for those children experiencing difficulty with reading.

The media center was set up to welcome all levels of readers from the accelerated to the easy readers. The students enjoyed the opportunity to sit and read at the child size tables and chairs or the small picnic tables put there just for them. Volunteers were encouraged to read to children one-on-one in the media center. The media center was spacious, cheerful and stocked with hundreds of books for these elementary children to learn about their world through fiction or nonfiction genres. The gifted program was removed a few years ago. This program was consolidated with other schools. There was an English as a Second Other Language (ESOL) Program, as well as a Specific Learning Disability Resource Program and a Speech Program in place.

The total number of instructional staff for the 1997-98 year included 59 with racial/ethnic composition consisting of 98 percent White and two percent Hispanic with a gender mix composed of 95 percent female and five percent male. The instructional staff's educational backgrounds ranged from bachelors's degrees (49), to master's degrees (nine), to a specialist degree (one). In addition to the 59 instructional staff members, there were 34 para-professionals who worked as classroom aides, clerical support, food service, and transportation employees for a total of 93 staff members at the school.

For the 1006 students, classes ranged from kindergarten to fifth grade. Names such as Building Blocks, Kids Company, Learning Station, Primary Corner, Voyagers, Discovery Dugout and Posse were given to the different levels of primary and intermediate grade levels. The distribution of the school's population included 504 males and 502 females. There were 434 White males, 18 Black males, 32 Hispanic males, seven Asian males, and 13 Indian and Mixed males. The female distribution for the school population was 430 White, eight Black, 38 Hispanic, 11 Asian, and 15 Indian and Mixed.

The teacher pupil ratio in the primary age level was up to 22 students to one teacher. The teacher pupil ratio in the intermediate age level was up to 29 students to one teacher. In kindergarten and first grade the ratio remained 20 to one in accordance with the legislative mandate. If the teacher to student ratio went over 20 to one during the year, in kindergarten, then a para-professional went into the classroom.

The writer was not employed in the school, but was interested in volunteering in this school. In conversations with school employees, the writer had learned that many students were reading below-grade level expectations. The writer felt a need to help below-grade level readers and hoped to make a positive impact in their lives.

To establish background information for consistent data for this report, first, second, and third grade level teachers in primary and intermediate houses were surveyed through an instrument created by this author (Appendix A: 135). The surveys were delivered to the teachers via the Reading Specialist with a note attached explaining the reasons for the survey and how the information would be used and a personal note from the Reading Specialist. The response was exceptional across the three grade levels. A supportive Reading Specialist contributed to the positive and comprehensive responses. A total of 20 teachers were surveyed in the primary and intermediate house including a resource teacher.

Six teachers surveyed identified their classrooms as grade level one in the primary house. The average number of years that these six teachers taught at the school was four years. The average number of years that these six teachers were in the teaching profession was five years. Five out of six teachers answered the survey question, "Approximately how many students in your class are reading below-grade level?" They responded that out of a total of 134 students, 40 students (30 percent) were reading below grade level. (This did not include one first grade class whose teacher explained without giving numbers that there were many below-level readers in the classroom at this point, but that was not unusual for the beginning of first grade.) A running record was used by six out of six teachers to assess the reading level of each individual student. A running record is a way to monitor and evaluate a child's reading. The advantages of using this assessment tool are that it (1) takes only five to 10 minutes, (2) it can be used with any reading material, (3) it is not a formalized test, and (4) it is 98 percent reliable. The running record (an adaption of the Informal Reading Inventory) offers a "picture" of a child's reading. It is also a way of observing that provides "documentation" of a child's reading behavior (Moore, 1997, telephone interview).

Five out of six teachers responded to the survey question, "How many are getting outside assistance with this need?" Twenty-eight out of 40 children (70 percent) received outside assistance with their reading needs. Three out of six teachers surveyed agreed that the students with weak reading skills probably had not been read to or with consistently at home. Two out of six teachers strongly agreed and one out of six disagreed with the survey statement. Three out of six teachers agreed that the curriculum did not fully meet these students' reading needs which restricted them from progressing at an average rate and three teachers strongly disagreed with the survey statement.

Table 1

Survey- Part One

First Grade Level Teachers	A	B	C	D	E	F
Number of students in class	22	22	24	*	22	22
Students below-grade level	6	8	4	*	13	9
Students receiving assistance	6	3	3	3	8	5
Students still needing assistance	0	5	1	*	5	4

* Data were not provided by the teacher.

Six out of six teachers strongly agreed that one-on-one instruction was helpful to their students who were reading below-grade level. In response to the statement that below-grade level parents did not seem to give their children one-on-one attention with their reading on a consistent basis, two out of six teachers disagreed, one agreed and two strongly agreed. One teacher out of six had mixed feelings on the subject. Five of the six teachers surveyed felt that other factors such as learning disabilities, processing and attention problems, developmental delays and unstable home environments could be responsible for the weak reading skills in their students.

Four out of six first grade level teachers surveyed felt that a combination of strategies was the most beneficial in building reading fluency in their beginning readers. One teacher explained that a combination of strategies was the most beneficial, but that sight-word vocabulary was very important also, in addition to being able to decode new words and read for meaning to aid in word decoding. One teacher stated the reason that she chose a combination of strategies was that no one strategy would work for all. She explained that good readers use a combination of phonics skills, practice with sight-word vocabulary, and context clues plus other strategies.

One teacher in six chose practice with sight-word vocabulary as the most beneficial way to build fluency in children with weak reading skills. The reason for this teacher's choice was because of her personal experience with sight-word vocabulary, context clues, and a combination of strategies and phonics daily. This teacher stated that sight-word vocabulary practice benefited the below-grade level students the most at the beginning stage of their reading development. Another teacher did not chose any of the areas, but responded that a one-on-one correspondence was the most beneficial area in developing fluency. An explanation given was that phonemic segmentation and targeted sight-words were practiced in the classroom. The major hurdle for this teacher was the below-grade readers who pointed to and concentrated on each word that they tried to read.

Two out of six first grade level teachers did not have any special training working with students with weak reading skills. Four out of six teachers had special training in working with students with weak reading skills. Two of the teachers who had some training felt that on a scale of one (the lowest degree) to five (the highest degree), their level of confidence in the special training was three. Two teachers felt a higher confidence with their training and selected a four and five to express that positive level. Six out of six teachers were open to assistance in helping their children with reading needs.

The next level surveyed was the second grade teachers in the primary house. The highest number of teachers who responded to the survey was from this level. Seven out of eight classroom teachers were surveyed and each of them responded to the survey. One resource teacher was also surveyed for her expertise. Since this school implemented a continuous progress model, these eight teachers identified various grade levels that they taught. Four teachers stated their grade level taught as second grade, two stated their grade level taught as kindergarten through second, another teacher defined her level as first/second grade and the resource teacher identified her students as kindergarten through fifth using the Specific Learning Disability (SLD) Inclusion model. Of the seven classroom teachers surveyed, one stated that she had only one child reading below-grade level, but agreed to give input.

The average number of years that the seven teachers and one resource teacher taught at this school was nine years. The average number of years that they were in the teaching profession was 14 years. Out of 167 children in the seven regular classrooms there were 35 children who were reading below-grade level for a total of 21 percent. Of the 35 below-grade level readers, 21 were receiving outside assistance with their reading needs (60 percent). Fourteen students were not receiving any outside assistance.

The following table compares the seven second grade level classrooms according to the number of students in each classroom and the number of students reading below-grade level in each classroom. Also, the table compares the number of students receiving assistance and the number of students still needing assistance.

Table 2

Teacher Survey - Part Two

Second Grade Level Teachers	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Number of students in class	23	24	25	24	24	24	23
Students below-grade level	11	0	0	12	5	1	6
Students receiving assistance	5	0	0	9	3	0	4
Students still needing assistance	6	0	0	3	2	1	2

According to the survey, five of eight teachers surveyed agreed that the children reading below-grade level had not been read to or with consistently at home; one out of eight teachers strongly agreed and one of eight disagreed with the statement. Only one teacher had mixed feelings about the statement.

Three of eight teachers surveyed agreed and one teacher strongly agreed that the curriculum did not fully meet these students' reading needs which restricted them from progressing at an average rate. Two of eight teachers surveyed disagreed, and one of eight strongly disagreed with the survey statement. One teacher did not respond to the statement.

There was a consensus among the teachers in regards to the importance of one-on-one instruction for these readers with weak reading skills. Two of eight teachers agreed and six of eight teachers strongly agreed that one-on-one instruction would be helpful to their students who were reading below-grade level.

These teachers felt very strongly about one-on-one instruction being beneficial to their readers with weak reading skills.

Three of eight teachers surveyed strongly agreed and three of the eight teachers agreed that the parents of below grade-level readers, did not seem to give them one-on-one attention with their reading on a consistent basis. Only one of eight teachers surveyed disagreed and one teacher did not respond. The survey also revealed that there were other factors that the one resource and seven second grade level teachers felt contributed to their students' weak reading skills. Some of the responses were as follows: some of the children are immature and are just not ready to read, some students have processing problems, and the number of students in classes makes it difficult to target the needy. Other factors included such hindrances as little prior knowledge, dysfunctional homes, a lack of continuity between the curriculum and teachers each year, incomplete school work, distractions, and poor motivation. One teacher suggested that consistency with phonemic awareness would be beneficial in helping these children. Another teacher suggested that whole group instruction with big books would be helpful because children have a hard time, unless seated right in front of the teacher.

From a selection of choices including practice with sight-word vocabulary, improving phonics skills, work with context clues, combination of strategies, and other, seven of eight second level teachers agreed that a combination of strategies would be the most beneficial in building fluency in their below-grade level readers.

Only one teacher of eight felt that practice with sight-word vocabulary would be the most beneficial in building reading fluency in poor readers.

One teacher added that using a multi-sensory approach should be a part of the combination of strategies and the use of basals with predictable vocabulary would be beneficial in helping the students with weak reading skills. Another teacher explained her choice by stating that all of the choices such as practice with sight-words, improving phonics skills, work with context clues, and a combination of strategies would be beneficial with daily small group or one-on-one instruction.

In response to the survey question, "Have you had any special training with students with weak reading skill?", five of eight second grade teachers surveyed noted that they had special training in working with students with weak reading skills; two teachers did not respond; one responded no training had been received. Three teachers with special training did not have below-grade level readers at the time, one teacher had only one and one teacher had five students with weak reading skills. These five teachers' training experiences included Primary Reading Intervention training. Of three teachers who had special training the consensus was that the training was helpful to the highest degree (5) when they taught children with weak reading skills in the past. Another teacher responded that a degree of three was the highest level of confidence felt in the training received. One teacher did not respond. The survey showed that two teachers who taught the majority of students with weak reading skills did not indicate any training.

Seven of eight teachers surveyed responded that they were open to assistance in helping these children with reading needs. Three of four teachers who taught the majority of children with weak reading skills in their classrooms indicated that they were open to assistance. One teacher did not feel that she needed outside assistance because nine of 12 of the below-grade level readers in her classroom were helped in varying degrees by going to first grade level classes to read or were reading with a para-professional in the Early Success Program.

Fourteen of 35 children reading below grade level were not in an outside program such as Early Success. One teacher felt that three of her students not in an outside program were already receiving help and one teacher felt that the one below-grade level student in the class was making progress without outside assistance. Therefore, only 10 of 167 students (6 percent) across the second grade level were substantially deficient in reading and needed assistance.

The third grade level survey revealed the greatest need in children substantially deficient in reading. There are not any special reading programs for this age group, para-professionals, volunteers or outside assistance. Six third grade level teachers responded to the teacher survey. Forty-seven of 117 students (40 percent) were reading below-grade level in these classes. The average number of years that the teachers taught at the school was six years. The average number of years that the teachers were in the teaching profession was eight years.

Three teachers specified that they taught levels three, four and five; two teachers specified levels three and four, and one teacher specified level three/ communications. Three teachers agreed and three strongly agreed that the students probably have not been read to or with consistently at home. Two teachers surveyed disagreed; one teacher strongly teacher disagreed; and two agreed with the statement that the curriculum did not fully meet these students' reading needs which restricted them from progressing at an average rate. One teacher did not respond.

Six of six teachers agreed that one-on-one instruction would be helpful to these students. Six of six teachers agreed that the parents of children who were reading below-grade level did not seem to give them one-on-one attention with their reading on a consistent basis. Some other important factors that these third grade level teachers felt contributed to their students' weak reading skills were: sufficient word calling skills, but weak comprehension; inconsistencies in the reading curriculum throughout the grade levels; lack of parental knowledge or involvement and persistence in working with these students' inabilities; language barriers such as the primary language being Spanish; frequent moving; poor economic status; poor self-esteem, malnutrition and laziness; and weak ability to focus and low interest. Another crucial factor that one teacher felt important to mention, was that these students who were experiencing weak reading skills had not been targeted for special programs prior to grade three.

Four of six teachers surveyed responded that they felt a combination of strategies was the most beneficial way to build reading fluency in their below-average readers. Two teachers explained their reasons for choosing a combination of strategies by stating that many children can "word call," but cannot put the reading together; there are many different types of learners; some are very visual and others are very auditory. Teachers also felt basic reading skills such as knowing the alphabet and sounds of letters, were missing for some students.

One teacher chose phonics skills as the most beneficial in building fluency in below-grade level readers. The reason for this choice was that many students in class either skip a word or create one, instead of attempting to sound out an unknown word. One of six teachers stated that a consistency of anything mostly, parents helping and stability (not moving around) would be beneficial.

Two of six third grade level teachers did not have any special training in working with students with weak reading skills. One expressed that the degree that an SLD workshop was helpful was a level of two out of five, two teachers stated that their degree of confidence felt was three out of five; another teacher stated a high degree of confidence of four out five. All six third grade level teachers were open to assistance in helping children with reading needs.

According to the teacher survey, the most critical area in need of intervention was a third/fourth grade level. The writer believed that if intervention did not take place, these students would continue to be at the lowest reading level.

The writer also believed that eventually a negative attitude would cause many to give up resulting in lost potential for their future dreams and goals in life. In addition, the writer believes these students deserve an opportunity to succeed in reading. Without this success, these third and fourth grade students may never discover the joy of literacy in their personal lives. Following is a table comparing first, second, and third grade levels of students who are reading below expectations. In addition, the table compares the students in each level who are receiving assistance to those who are still needing assistance. The data were compiled from the teacher survey.

Table 3

Teacher Survey - Part Three

Grade Level	Teachers' Response	Students Below Grade Level	Receiving Assistance	Needing Assistance
First*	5 out of 6	40 out of 134	28	12
Second	7 out of 7	35 out of 167	21	14
Third*	5 out of 6	47 out of 117	06	41

*One first grade teacher and one third grade teacher did not provide adequate data for Table 3.

According to the survey data, the most critical area in the third/fourth grade level was the classroom with 24 out of 24 students reading below-grade level. This was the SLD Inclusion Model class which the writer selected as the target group.

Table 4

Teacher Survey- Part Four

Third Grade Level Teachers	A	B	C	D	E	F
Students in class	2	18	27	*	24	26
Students below-grade level	15	4	0	7	24	4
Students receiving assistance	0	2	0	*	4 **	0
Students still needing assistance	15	2	0	*	20	4

*Data were not provided by the teacher. **Three are staffed Specific Learning Disability and one is staffed Educable Mentally Handicapped.

The results of the running records completed by the classroom teacher for the 24 targeted third/fourth grade students are listed in the following table (Table 5: 35). Based on the teacher's running records of November, 1997, students' reading levels ranged from Emergent (k-1 grade equivalent) to Late Transitional (late third grade level).

Currently, there are 24 out of 24 third/fourth grade level students reading substantially below-grade level according to their running records (Emergent reading level {K-1} to late transitional reading level {3.7}). Ideally, all 24 children should be reading at least a 3.3 for third and 4.3 for fourth grade level. This discrepancy of two months to 2.3 years created a critical need to intervene to help these children with weak reading skills. There was a need to improve students' reading abilities to promote grade level skills among the different third and fourth grade level students in this class.

Table 5

Target third/fourth grade class of 24 students

Student	Current Grade	Instructional Level	Grade Equivalent	Should be	Discrepancy
A*	3	Emergent	K-1	3.3	2.3
B*	3	Emergent	K-1	3.3	2.3
C	3	Early Transitional	2.0	3.3	1.3
D	3	Early Transitional	2.0	3.3	1.3
E*	3	Early Transitional	2.0	3.3	1.3
F	3	Early Transitional	2.7	3.3	.6
G	3	Early Transitional	2.5	3.3	.8
H*	3	Early Transitional	2.1	3.3	1.2
I	3	Early Transitional	2.1	3.3	1.2
J	3	Early Transitional	2.1	3.3	1.2
K	3	Early Transitional	2.5	3.3	. 8
L	3	Mid -Transitional	3.1	3.3	.2
M	3	Mid -Transitional	3.0	3.3	.3
N	4	Mid -Transitional	3.1	4.3	1.2
O	4	Mid -Transitional	3.5	4.3	.8
P	3	Late Transitional	3.0	3.3	.3
Q	4	Late Transitional	3.7	4.3	.6
R	4	Late Transitional	3.7	4.3	.6
S	4	Late Transitional	3.0	4.3	1.3
T	4	Late Transitional	3.0	4.3	1.3
U	4	Late Transitional	3.0	4.3	1.3
V	4	Late Transitional	3.0	4.3	1.3
W	4	Late Transitional	3.0	4.3	1.3
X	4	Late Transitional	3.7	4.3	.6

*Educable Mentally Handicapped and Specific Learning Disabled

In order to understand possible causes for the students' weak reading skills, this writer personally interviewed the targeted third/fourth grade level teacher. She said that the class consisted of 24 students below-grade level including one staffed as Educable Mentally Handicapped, three officially staffed as

Specific Learning Disabled, and one student retained in third grade. She further stated that this group was at the lowest end of the socio-economic scale in the entire school population of 1006 students. The teacher had only one SLD training workshop and rated her confidence level in teaching these students as a two out of five on a scale of one to five. She is a young teacher with three years of experience. There are no volunteer parents that this teacher can count on, no para-professionals to help, no special reading pull-out programs or interventions for third and fourth grade level students. One day a week, a sixth grade student helps a couple of hours and an SLD teacher maintains her hours with the staffed children in the classroom. In addition, this third grade level teacher was a team leader which meant that she was responsible to lead the teachers in her group or pod, answer questions about the current theme or lesson plans and provide support to her team of teachers. Additional pressure was put on this teacher because one member of her team was on maternity leave. Therefore, a substitute teacher was in charge of that class. This situation added pressure to the targeted third/fourth grade level teacher who was responsible to help the substitute teacher, grade important writing papers and fill out progress reports for two classes at the end of the nine weeks period. Another probable cause the targeted teacher stated was the fact that these children had not received any early assessment.

Children who are substantially deficient in their reading skills need to achieve success in all areas of the curriculum but especially during reading time. In working with these children, it was important to remember that an immersion of all types and levels of literature was necessary to insure that poor readers become accomplished readers (Strickland, 1990). The objectives set up by the writer were those that could be obtained by the majority of the children in the targeted group.

The proposed objectives were: Over a period of 12 weeks, at least 18 of 24 targeted third/fourth grade students will demonstrate an increase in their positive attitude towards reading by scoring at least an average of 3.5 on a 5- point Likert style writer created reading attitude inventory (Appendix B: 143). Students were both pre and post tested by the writer.

A second objective was: Over a period of 12 weeks, at least 18 of the targeted 24 third/fourth grade students will increase their fluency in reading by at least one level as measured by the Brocato Fluency Checklist (created by the writer) (Appendix C: 147). Students were both pre and post tested by the writer.

The final objective was: Over a period of 12 weeks, at least 18 of the 24 targeted third and fourth grade students will increase their oral reading skills by at least six months as measured by the Slosson Oral Reading Test - Revised (SORT-R). Students were both pre and post tested by the writer.

Chapter II

Research and Planned Solution Strategy

Reading is important to succeed in any walk of life, and a love of literacy is foundational to that success. The best method of teaching reading is a major topic of discussion in educational circles. Because each child is different and there is no one method that is better than another, the educator must be knowledgable of many effective methods to teach reading. Thus the writer focused on research that used a combination approach to teach reading and a literature-based environment to promote a love of literacy.

Strickland (1990) explained that new insights into how children learn to read and write were changing dramatically the teaching of literacy. She stated that literacy was no longer regarded as simply a cognitive skill, but as a complex activity with social, linguistic, and psychological aspects. Strickland stated that the study of literacy from the child's point of view had given new insights into how young children learn to read and write.

The following are some of these insights: learning to read and write begin early in life and are ongoing; they occur as natural parts of children's daily lives, not as something rare or mysterious; and they are interrelated processes that develop in connection with oral language. Strickland stated that the language processes-listening, speaking, reading, and writing- develop in an interdependent manner, informing and supporting each other. Strickland continued by stating that learning to read and write requires active participation in activities that have meaning in the child's daily life. Strickland (1990) believes that learning involves interaction with responsive others such as care givers, parents, and teachers. She stated that it is important for these responsive others to become increasingly aware of the importance of young children's attempts to write. She continued by stating that it is equally important for these responsive others to take the time to listen to the child's stories and messages seen only as scribbling and which may be intelligible only to the writer. She stated that learning to read and write is particularly enhanced by shared book experiences. Strickland also encourages the child, teacher, and parent to celebrate each new learning by focusing on what is known rather than what is lacking. Strickland believes that teaching literacy involves the teacher's role as a facilitator of children's learning which means that the environment must be structured so that certain events are likely to occur. Strickland's view of the teacher as a facilitator means that the teacher believes that learning stems as much from those incidental literary events that occur by virtue of living within a print rich environment, as from the numerous daily activities planned to involve children in oral and written language. The teacher/facilitator needs to expect differences in the way children respond to the activities planned.

The teacher as a facilitator must carefully monitor children's responses and plan accordingly. The teacher must help children build on what they already know in order to make connections to new learning. Strickland's view is that providing daily opportunities for varied experiences with literacy is the best assurance that children will begin to demonstrate what they know about writing and spelling as they compose stories and messages. She stated that teachers must also help parents to understand new approaches to literacy that may be outside their personal experiences and understanding.

In order to motivate children who have not had much success in reading, Koyra (1997), a third grade teacher, discovered that children should have a purpose and a vision for literacy that will motivate them to create meaning. Koyra stated that she was surprised that her students saw reading and writing unrelated to their world outside of school. She took for granted that they would naturally make the leap between their own budding literacy at school, and the literacy they encountered away from school. She devised activities to help them make the connection between literacy and its relevancy in people and places that were familiar to them. Some of the activities included making a chart to analyze the word "literacy," a literacy scavenger hunt, interviews, group discussions of information, and analyzing their findings on an affinity diagram. Finally, the students used the skills they learned to invite others to a literacy celebration.

Searfoss (1997) described the methods of teaching reading from the past and the present. The past methods included using commercial basal reading series, initial teaching alphabet, language experience, phonics-based, linguistic, individualized reading, and eclectic. The present methods include commercial literacy programs, literature-based reading instruction, whole language methods, integrated/thematic instruction, skills (phonics)-based and teaching a combination of these strategies. The author stated that phonics regardless of what adjective appears before or after it, is still being used by teachers. Also, he also found that teachers still take what they need from a variety of methods.

Searfoss (1997) further stated that the past widely used traditional measures of a child's reading readiness are different from the emerging reader of today. The past readiness skills included auditory discrimination, recognizing upper and lower case letters, word learning, copying a figure, figure discrimination, vocabulary, listening-following directions, and word recognition. The present emergent literacy view includes print awareness, phonemic awareness, concepts of print, story sense, oral language, writing, letter identification, and recognizing high-frequency words.

Searfoss (1997) noted that in today's current furor over phonics, studies are appearing once again as support for phonics instruction, although these studies offer little in the way of specifics about the kinds of effective phonics instruction. He noted that educators need to remember what teachers are about, which is helping children learn that grand and powerful and wonderful thing of learning to read. Searfoss found the answer to the research question concerning which method of reading instruction was better to be the same presently as it was in the past studies: there is no one approach that is better. Searfoss encourages teachers to become decision makers and reflective practitioners, basing their instruction on sound theory. He believes that the highest and best instruction methods for the children in a classroom are the ones personally constructed by the teacher. He encourages educators not to be fearful when nontraditional ways of thinking or doing differ from the familiar and the comfortable.

Baumann and Ivey (1997) sought to determine whether literacy strategy instruction could be integrated within a literature-based environment. They felt the significance of their study rested in its ability to provide detailed empirical information about the nature and competence of a combined literature/strategy-based instructional program. They examined whether an entire class of second grade students could develop concurrently the skills and strategies involved with reading and writing, a knowledge and appreciation of literature, in addition to the desire to engage in reading and writing tasks for learning and pleasure. The first author was a full time second grade teacher and the second author was a participant observer in the classroom. Appreciation for books and literature was demonstrated by the children's responses to class read alouds, which the author/teacher noted often in his journal.

Each group of children engaged in multiple reading and writing activities across the reading period. Although the nature of the text dictated the exact daily structure for the period, students typically engaged in three kinds of activities. First, the students participated in reading practice times which included students reading connected text a significant number of times during the reading period. Some of these were structured reading activities; others were more open-ended. Strategy lessons were also implemented. Instruction in word identification, vocabulary, comprehension, literature reading, and writing strategies were presented through three different lesson structures. These structures included detailed, brief, and impromptu strategy lessons. The last type of activity that the children engaged in was the reading/language arts activities. In this activity, the author/teacher read a book to a group to provide background knowledge and set the mood for their introduction to another story. Then they participated in activities that related to the story such as creating a large quilt on a bulletin board. This quilt captured their life's experience as an extension of the main character's quilt in the story they were reading. Later, the author/teacher read additional books that dealt with the topic of quilts as a means to memorialize important events in a person's life.

After the reading period, chapter books both nonfiction and fiction were read aloud that connected to the units planned by the author/teacher After recess, the children convened in front of the reader's/writer's chair for daily class meeting, a time for sharing, conversation, celebration, and reading aloud. The children brought things in to share and talk about. Picture book reading was an important element of the class meeting time. Read aloud titles came up spontaneously or were recommended or selected by the students. Poetry also was requested by the children regularly. The writing period involved process writing on mostly self-selected topics.

After lunch, the author/teacher spent a few minutes reading aloud from a chapter book and then the children participated in a second- and fifth-grade weekly Reading/Writing Buddies time. The children also participated in content reading and writing. In connection with Black History Month, the author/teacher assembled a collection of biographical trade books, each featuring a prominent historical or contemporary African American person. Also the reader's/writer's chair was a time reserved several times a week for students to read aloud a book they had rehearsed or to share a recent written composition.

Literacy was also extended to the children's homes in several ways, one of the most popular being Leo the Lion the Read-With-Me Lion and Molly the Read-With-Me Monkey. Leo and Molly, stuffed animals with a pocket for a picture book and a parent card describing shared techniques, accompanied different children home each day. The findings supported the literature-based program which improved children's knowledge and appreciation of and response to literature. Second, the authors confirmed that reading strategy instruction could be taught effectively with and through literature. Third, the authors found that skills teaching and literature usage could be used effectively together. The targeted second graders understood that during part of the reading strategies time, they learned how to pronounce words and understand meanings in sentences, paragraphs, and stories. They also understood the purpose of all this was that they could become better readers and then enjoy literature and learn from books.

The data were synthesized to two fundamental findings. First, second-grade students became more proficient in reading and writing abilities. Second, students grew in knowledge, interest, and attitudes toward reading, writing, and literature. The authors believed that the literature enhanced students' reading and writing fluency, and their developing literacy abilities promoted their literary knowledge and appreciation.

Morrow and Tracey (1997) examined how phonics instruction was used in a number of early childhood classrooms. The purpose of the study was to examine classroom teachers' actual practices when teaching phonics. The observations took place during a four month period in 75 classrooms that included 29 preschool classes, 20 kindergartens, 13 first grades, and 14 second grades for a total of 456 visits. The observers were students enrolled in a teacher education program and were trained to observe and record incidents of phonics instruction. The classroom teachers did not know the focus of the note-taking. At the conclusion of the data-collection period, the teachers were interviewed regarding how they taught phonics and the importance they placed on it in literacy instruction. Teachers' comments were compared with the recorded observation of their actual practices. A total of 722 observations of phonics instruction were recorded from the 76 classrooms with first and second-grade observations grouped together.

The authors believed that given the importance of phonics knowledge in early reading, the question could no longer be whether or not this type of instruction was important, but which approaches to teaching phonic relationships were most effective. The results of this study indicated that the high percentage of spontaneous, contextual activities used to teach phonics relationships in the preschool classrooms dropped off dramatically when children entered kindergarten and the primary grades where instructional experiences were mostly explicit or specific. Phonics instruction observed throughout the grades tended to be either contextual or explicit, with only a few incidents of a combined approach.

One explanation for the finding that phonics instruction became more explicit was that first and second-grade teachers may have felt more compelled to follow a set curriculum because of the pressure of standardized testing. A second finding was that there were possible misconceptions among classroom teachers regarding phonics instruction. Preschool teachers reported that they did not teach phonics often which was contrary to the observations. The authors felt that misconceptions about phonics instruction needed to be clarified for educators. The third finding was that the combined approach was observed infrequently and may be due to a misunderstanding of what a combined approach was. The authors explained that a combination approach was one in which phonics instruction used both explicit instruction and contextual experiences. The authors explained that the teacher planned for phonics instruction by providing meaningful settings for learning with explicit strategies. Another explanation was that it may be more difficult to design combined lessons. The authors stated that based on the results of this investigation, teachers need to make a conscious effort to examine and reflect upon the strategies they use for teaching phonics in order to select the best type of experiences for the children they teach. They also believed that the integration of enhanced knowledge and increased self-reflection would lead to improved learning for children.

Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley (1996) examined nine to 11 year old students' vocabulary acquisition. This acquisition included listening to stories with a brief explanation of the unfamiliar target words, listening to stories with no explanation of the words, and having no exposure to the stories or vocabulary (the control group). A total of 175 fourth graders from six classrooms in two urban elementary schools participated in the study.

Two popular, but unfamiliar (to the class), trade books were selected to be read by the teacher each day. Each story was read over a period of five school days. All three groups were given a pretest and post test for each story. Six weeks later, a delayed post test was given on the words from both stories.

The students who listened to two stories along with a brief explanation of target words learned significantly more new words and remembered them better six weeks later than students who heard stories with no explanation of the words and students in the control group. Oral presentation of words in the context of a story by itself did not result in increased vocabulary knowledge. The authors concluded that offering simple explanations of words in the context of an interesting story was a practical and effective method of vocabulary instruction. The implication for teachers and parents was that reading stories aloud, along with brief explanations of unfamiliar vocabulary words, could produce significant gains in vocabulary.

Senechal, LaFevre, Hudson, and Lawson (1996) examined the specific issue of whether variations in children's exposure to storybooks were related to differences in vocabulary knowledge and differences in vocabulary scores for three and six-year olds. They stated that learning new vocabulary was central to acquiring language. They also believed that the process of learning words starts in infancy and proceeds rapidly throughout childhood. Two experiments were done working with 119 children (55 girls and 64 boys) and their parents. Children were recruited from day-care centers and nursery schools in a large Canadian city. In these two experiments the authors found that parents' and children's knowledge of children's books were very good predictors of language skills for preschoolers. The measures of storybook knowledge were stronger predictors than parent-report measures of reading frequency. The measures of storybook knowledge were simple to use and reliable. The storybook exposure checklist was not likely to be blamed on subject-desirability, and did not require the children's parents to interpret or guess what the teacher meant by frequency of reading. The Storybook Recall Task tapped the children's knowledge of storybooks, which had the advantage of reflecting a wide range of experiences with books such as at home, in day care, and in the library. The authors found that these measures were important alternative tools for studying the role of literacy experiences in language development. The findings also suggested that storybook experiences during the preschool years may be important influences on the development of children's language skills.

Zimmerman (1990) explored whether vocabulary instruction made a difference. The author reported on a pilot study of the combined efforts of reading and interactive vocabulary instruction for foreign postsecondary students preparing for American university entrance. A 10-week classroom based study tested the theory that students exposed to a combination of regular periods of reading and interactive vocabulary instruction would show significant increases in their knowledge of the general terms that were used widely across academic fields. Students were divided into groups: one received three hours of interactive vocabulary instruction plus an assignment to read self-selected materials; the other received the self-selected reading assignment only. The results of this study suggested that interactive vocabulary instruction accompanied by moderate amounts of self-selected and course-related reading led to gains in vocabulary knowledge; students' perceptions of the best way to learn words supported these results. It was argued that teachers should give consideration to the effects of combining reading and interactive vocabulary instruction. The boundaries of an interactive vocabulary instruction included most of the following: multiple exposures to words, exposures to words in meaningful contexts, rich and varied information about each word, establishment of ties between instructed words, student experience, and prior knowledge in addition to active participation by students in the learning process. The results of the checklist were consistent with the theory that students who had been exposed to a combination of regular periods of reading and interactive vocabulary would show an increase in vocabulary knowledge.

Palmer and Codling (1994) stated that individuals try to attain goals that they value and can achieve based on their beliefs about their competence in a particular situation. The authors were interested in more fully understanding how children acquire the motivation to develop into engaged readers and how personal and situational factors influenced students' motivation to read. Approximately 330 third-and fifth-grade students from 16 classrooms in two school districts participated in this year-long study of motivation to read. In addition, 48 students were randomly selected to participate in the in-depth conversational interview.

The authors developed a questionnaire for assessing three dimensions of motivation to read: self-concept as a reader, value of reading, and reasons for reading in addition to the conversational interviews with selected students. Across all reading proficiency levels and across both highly motivated and less motivated students, four powerful aspects of literacy learning emerged as significant motivational factors-prior experiences with books, social interactions about books, book access, and book choice. For both third- and fifth-grade students, prior experience with books was the most consistently mentioned key to motivation to read. One of the most frequently occurring themes throughout the interviews was the compelling nature of familiar and comfortable series books which provided repeated reading experiences of a special kind. The second aspect that these students mentioned was social interaction about books. The data consistently revealed that children placed a high priority on reading books they heard about from others-friends, parents, and teachers. The third strong aspect of motivation in children was book access. Throughout the interviews, children made comments about the importance of book access and book ownership in motivation to read. Book access for children in this study was primarily through borrowing from their classroom libraries and other sources such as the school and public library. This pointed to the importance of providing a book-rich classroom environment. Almost all children in the study reported having a personal home library created from gifts from family and friends. The study revealed that the children were more apt to read when given opportunities to read books of their own choosing. Over 25% of the children indicated that they had chosen a book because a teacher or friend had told them about it, or the teacher had read it out loud to the class. This suggested an important relationship between self-selection (choice) and social interactions about books. The findings of this investigation supported the notion that teachers have a positive impact on children's motivation to read through careful planning of the classroom literacy environment.

Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson, and Watts (1997) described Webster Magnet School's two year effort to go beyond early reading intervention. The school consisted of 1,100 children ranging in kindergarten to sixth grade (ages five through 12) from diverse backgrounds. The teachers identified 31 children whose mean score on the fall Metropolitan Achievement Test 7 (MAT, 1993) was at about the 10th percentile. The research intervention program developed at Webster was based on a number of instructional components found to be effective in fostering reading growth. Some of them were repeated reading, coaching children in the use of strategies to foster independence in reading and writing, using choral reading, and one-on-one tutoring. The authors used books with the students that ranged progressively from 40 to 200 words from October to March. Then they used easy readers from January to May. This intervention was used in a regular classroom model. The authors emphasized that even in elementary schools fortunate enough to have Reading Recovery as Webster did, there were older children in grade two and beyond who were in need of extra help in reading.

Some decoding and self-monitoring strategies that were emphasized in the intervention program included encouraging the students to think about what would make sense, thinking of a word that starts with the same letter in the unknown word that would make sense, and looking for a familiar rhyming part. Other decoding strategies that were encouraged were to sound out the word and think about what would make sense. They were encouraged to use picture clues and to read past the word and then come back to it if needed.

Students were also taught self-monitoring strategies such as checking to see if the word looked like what was on the page and made sense. Also, students could return to a word they were having trouble with if the sentence was not making sense. The authors were pleased that the combination of the reading intervention enrichment class and cross-age tutoring program carried out in this project made important differences in the reading ability of struggling readers with a high number of seven and eight year-olds in need of extra help in reading. Furthermore, the older children (tutors), who were themselves behind in reading, made progress. The authors were equally pleased that the project was incorporated into other classrooms the following year. Significant changes in teachers' methods were implemented to help struggling readers in the regular classroom.

Salembier and Cheng (1997) stated that middle school students both with and without learning disabilities could benefit from correlating scuba-diving lessons with reading strange and wonderful words they may see in the depth of their books. The authors described a strategy students can learn to improve their word-recognition skills and, in the process, build their understanding in many subject areas. The SCUBA-D mnemonic strategy included six different cues for students to use when they encountered unfamiliar words in their reading. The S in Scuba - D alerted the students to sound the word out or look at the letters and say the letter sounds starting at the beginning of the word and moving to the end. The letter C stands for check the clues in the sentence or think about the meaning of the other words in the sentence and guess a word that fits in place of the unknown word. The student's guess should start with the same letter as the unknown word. The letter U stands for using the main idea and picture clues. Also, the student could use the main idea and picture clues to discover what the story paragraph and reading was mostly about (by reading the title and first sentence and looking at any pictures on the page for clues). Next, the student goes back to the unknown word and tries to guess the best word that begins with the same letter. The letter B stands for breaking words into parts or looking for the smaller pieces which help figure out the bigger words. These smaller parts might be found in the beginning, middle, or ending of the word. The letter A is used to remind the student to ask for help. If the first four steps do not help a student figure out the unknown word, then he/she should ask the teacher or neighbor for help. Finally, the letter D stands for dive into the dictionary. Diving into the dictionary means looking the word up. Next, the students uses dictionary skills to figure out how to pronounce the unknown word by sounding out the letters in parentheses next to the word.

The SCUBA-D acronym was designed based on sound research on how effective readers attack unfamiliar words. SCUBA-D uses context clues, phonics, and dictionary skills to help students identify difficult words in their classroom materials and homework assignments. The authors conducted eight field tests in eight general education classrooms at a rural middle school in Vermont. Eight general education teachers, two special education teachers, and 190 seventh- and eighth-grade students with and without disabilities participated. Some of the advantages of this instructional approach were its compactness for teachers, its easy assimilation into the established curriculum, and its usefulness with students of varying reading abilities. The skills needed to implement the SCUBA-D were to be able to read at the second grade level or above, have knowledge of phonics, and structural analysis, and to be able to locate words in the dictionary.

The following seven steps were used as a guide to teach the SCUBA-D strategy. First, the SCUBA-D goal was introduced, and what a scuba diver does was taught. The students were shown how this idea related to identifying unknown words. Second, the rationale for the SCUBA-D strategy was discussed and then the SCUBA-D strategy was described. Fourth, the strategy was modeled and fifth, it was memorized. Sixth, the SCUBA-D strategy was practiced and transfer was promoted. Finally, maintenance of the strategy was promoted. The authors believed that when students owned the SCUBA-D strategy they could manage their own learning and find meaning in their content area classes.

Flood and Lapp (1994) designed a blueprint for success for developing literary appreciation and literacy skills. They stated that through authentic and meaningful experiences with print, many teachers encouraged their students to develop skills by learning literature best through reading and sharing literature. The author proposed to combine two different traditions to produce an effective instructional program. One tradition emphasized instruction in traditional comprehension skills (main idea, sequencing, cause and effect). The other tradition was literature-response groups in which children shared their responses to various pieces of literature in the context of supportive groups. In doing so, they proposed that they promote both dimensions of the goal- to have children respond to literature in richly supportive discussion groups where they socially constructed meaning and to have children revisit texts to develop specific literacy skills.

The authors' plan consisted of first selecting a book by obtaining the students' input and selecting quality literature that would allow discussion of multiple topics and perspectives within the story. The authors suggested selecting quality stories and adding folktales as a good way to develop a unit and make literary comparisons across cultures and time. Second, it was important to provide a conceptual overview that connected students with previous and upcoming text experiences. Third, reading aloud with different tones of voice helped the stories come alive. Pacing the reading and allowing the students to see the beautiful illustrations and follow the plot was important. Fourth, children would respond to the story by writing in their literature journals even before open discussions. Drawing pictures, or writing a series of words, phrases, sentences or paragraphs, gave the students an opportunity to reflect upon what the story meant. Fifth, after the first reading and writing, a whole group discussion could encourage students to relate their personal experiences to the experiences of characters in the story and the experiences of other class members. Sixth, revisiting the story for specific purposes, which would be drawn from the discussion and would be different for each small group, whole group or individual student was encouraged. Some students may need to develop specific reading skills and strategies, such as decoding, word recognition, comparing/contrasting, or understanding the author's craft. Others may need to write about the text in reading logs or journals and others might need to talk further about the story. After concluding the first large group discussion, it may be necessary to revisit the text several times with the entire class or with small groups. The final phrase of the lesson was the extension phrase which was used to promote transitions to other books by the same author or other readings about the same topic or theme. The authors also felt that implementing a Reader's Workshop to present a mini- lesson on a particular topic to a selected group of students would be beneficial.

Lapp and Flood (1997) described how using trade books could promote exciting activities for teachers to use within classrooms. After reading and rereading the story the children looked at the sentences. and identified the number of words in each; they noted punctuation, directionality, capitalization; they matched sights words (I, the, see, you, me) in the book with the ones on the sight words section of their word wall. Next, the teacher explained rhyming words to the children. She asked them to think of other words they knew that rhymed with words in the story. They developed a list. They read the list together while listening for particular vowel sounds that were targeted. The teacher and children reread the story together and shared additional thoughts about the story. They also took turns reading the story to each other. When they finished their words and the story, they were able to visit the drama center to put together a costume from a collection of garments. The children role played. When the teacher and small groups were finished these student would share their acting with the whole class.

After reading and rereading the book, the class extension activities including word matching, retellings with story strips, cloze sentences, and writing additional sentences that fit the pattern of the book. The children especially enjoyed playing a game using the story content and giving clues via pantomiming.

They also enjoyed role playing, drawing and writing about the events in the story. In addition, after meeting with all of the children in groups, the teacher called several children to her teacher center one at a time and worked with them individually at the text, sentence, word, or letter level. The conversations with the class, groups and individuals were designed to develop story understanding. The teacher encouraged the use of multiple strategies such as pausing if they were not able to read a word and trying to say the first sound to help the children improve their reading. She also taught them to check to see if the word contained a phonogram that was similar to one on the word wall. She gave further instructions to help with unknown words such as looking for pictures clues, or reading ahead to see if the other words could help give them the meaning.

Flood and Lapp (1997) further stated that sight word recognition (in which the child builds a sight word vocabulary) was an important goal of reading instruction. Also, the authors stated that the goal of phonics was to help children learn the mapping between letters and sounds, but it was not a goal unto itself. Phonics provided children with the knowledge needed to decipher a word in order to approximate pronunciation. The authors cited that proficient readers thoroughly integrated strategies since they use prior knowledge, context, and letter/sound relationships (phonics) as needed to identify words and to construct meaning. In contrast less proficient readers were often the victims of isolated phonics instruction that was devoid of strategies, including phonics, designed to help one make meaning while reading. The author described teaching reading explicitly and contextually. In this type of reading instruction, the teacher taught all of the letters and phonogram families explicitly, but she also contextualized the instruction because she believed that children come to school wanting to hold, touch, and read books. She believed that motivation to read was enhanced as children are taught strategies while exploring many wonderful age-appropriate books. When phonics was taught devoid of books, the children were asked to postpone their excitement for literacy. The authors agreed that children could rely on phonics as their only meaning making strategy if phonics instruction was over emphasized or taught in isolation. The authors compared a child being taught using isolated phonics instruction to some adults who practice their golf swings without understanding the relationship of the swing to the game. These golfers may improve their swings but never become proficient golfers. The authors stressed that attitude and enthusiasm mattered.

Flood and Lapp (1997) encouraged using a balanced approach toward literacy instruction in order to create harmony in the learner's and the teacher's mind. They felt that this balanced approach helped children integrate what they already know with new strategies, skills and content that will best serve their new and developing reading interest. The authors believed that a balanced approach ensured that the connection between prior knowledge and new knowledge could become a reality when children are taught language arts skills and strategies in a context that invited them to explore the wonderful world of books.

Reese (1996), a second grade teacher, was given a grant to purchase 44 wordless picture books (36 different titles). Her main criteria was that the wordless books were in print and did not have any written text to accompany the pictures. After the class completed their book, each child read a page orally. Then two children were selected to read the book to the principal and two other children read the book to a first-grade classroom. As an evaluation, the first graders were asked if they thought the story made sense. The two second-grader readers gave feedback upon their return to the class. The class decided if revisions needed to be made.

When the children wanted to do a book on their own, Reese paired a skilled reader and speller with a less skilled reader and speller and gave each team a wordless picture book. The partners looked at the pictures and discussed what sentences to use; then they were given a packet of self-sticking notes to use when writing their sentences. Both partners read the finished story to each other, checking to see if the story made sense, and corrections were made if needed. The partners picked another class that would enjoy sharing the story.

Finally, Reese allowed the children to choose another wordless picture book from the titles to complete independently. They repeated the processes. Each student read their completed book to the class. Then the kindergarten, first, and second graders were invited to the cafeteria to listen to the completed books. Each visitor sat with one of the " authors," and gave feedback on the effectiveness of the story in relation to the pictures. The visitors rotated and listened to other stories.

Throughout the six months of the grant project, the students learned to use correct punctuation and verb tense, write stories in complete sentences, use linking words, expand their ideas to better describe the pictures, and personalize and produce meaningful stories. They learned to summarize pages with multiple pictures, at the same time, make sure the sentences matched the action shown in the pictures. Reese was pleased that the children were able to build their reading and writing skills and strategies to ultimately produce a unique book.

McCormick and Becker (1996) presented a review of investigations related to word learning of learning disabled students. The studies described by the authors were taken from a literature review covering the last 15 years. These investigations addressed common instructional concerns of regular classroom teachers who provided reading instruction to learning disabled pupils in inclusion programs and gave guidance to special education teachers, as well as to university personnel who train both groups of professionals. Many teachers expressed concern that they were not prepared to deal with the difficult problems these pupils faced. This research focused on word study but did not imply a devaluing of concern for comprehension. There is a growing awareness in the teaching profession of the crucial role word knowledge plays in supporting text perception and topic understanding. The authors found that learning disabled readers, like nonlearning disabled readers, responded positively to abundant opportunities to engage with meaningful print

Vandervelden and Siegel (1997) stated that early phonological processing (the use of sounds in language) skills are strongly related to progress in early literacy. They also stated that a lack of phonological processing skills are found related to specific reading disability. Thirty kindergarten children aged 5.1 to 6.0 years (15 from two different schools) were assigned to an experimental group and a control group. They were pretested and post tested on instruction that was designed to assist the gradually expanding use of letter-phoneme (sound) relationships in early reading and spelling. The authors developed 12-weeks of intervention related to the use of sounds in language skills and reading. The experimental approach emphasized children's use of phonological recoding (the systematic relationship between letters and sounds) to recognize, spell and read (pronounce) words. The results indicated an effect of the experimental intervention on the acquisition of early phonological recoding for all three measures: speech-to-print matching, spelling and pseudo words (nonwords). Overall, the results for the experimental group indicated enhanced performance not only on the measures of phonological process skills, but also on the measures of reading. The authors stated that the results suggested that supplementary instruction to enhance the development of phonemes (sound) awareness may be more effective when children are guided in recognizing and segmenting (dividing) phonemes as part of learning to read and write rather than as part of an isolated skill. The authors explained the importance of seeing word spellings in the development of phoneme awareness. They noted that the printed word is a visibly segmented sequence of letters. Therefore, identification of letters within words appeared easy to the children. Even low-scoring children learned to identify the first letter in words with minimal practice at the starting point in the experimental intervention. If a child was unable to read a word, the instructor gave introductory lessons or corrective feedback for one or two-consonant phonological recodings that focused on recognizing or segmenting the second consonant in final position or second-syllable initial.

Vandervelden and Siegel (1997) defined phonological recoding as the use of systematic (planned or precise) relationships between letters and phonemes (sounds) to recognize the printed match of a spoken word or syllable, to retrieve the pronunciation of an unknown printed string, or to spell. One example of phonological recoding was the location and degree of overlap in letter-phoneme matches. For example, the child was observed selecting the printed word “frog” from the words “ sad” and “mitt”, after hearing the word “frog”. Whereas the selection of the word “frog” from the words ”friend, frog, and flop” required phonological recoding (understanding the planned or precise relationship between the letters and sounds) that exceeded the initial letter but can be made by recognizing the relationship between the final letter and phoneme. For the four high-scoring children, in addition to full segmentation, instruction emphasized deletion and substitution as part of learning to use rime (the initial consonant) comparisons in reading and spelling.

The comparisons between the individual gain scores in both groups indicated that the experimental intervention appeared effective also with most children who spoke English as a second language and whose proficiency in English varied from adequate to excellent. The authors were encouraged that the experimental intervention seemed to empower children for reading. For example, self-corrections in reading and spelling were common. The authors also concluded the experimental intervention enhanced the phonological processing skills and early reading ability of high and low-scoring children. The authors stated that what is taught to children and how it is taught were related to children's progress in becoming readers and writers. The experimental approach focused on the development of fundamental or essential skills in phonological recoding. The intervention emphasized speech-to-print word matching as a key experience with print during which children were guided to notice and develop an increasingly greater understanding of the systematic relationship between the letters in printed words and the phonemes underlying spoken language. The approach further reflected the shared relationship between phonological recoding and its component skills and between these phonological processing skills and early reading. For that reason, letter-phoneme correspondences and phoneme awareness were developed as part of using early skill in phonological recoding as children learned to recognize, spell, and read words. The results of the present study suggested that, with appropriate early intervention, many more children may experience early success in learning to read and write and may escape the spiral of failure that characterize the older child with reading disabilities.

Bowers (1993) studied factors that related to the slower reading of text by reading disabled students compared to average readers. Thirty-seven children selected as poor and average readers in grade two were followed through grade four. Each year they reread text passages at a level of difficulty appropriate for each child.

One tool that the authors used (in addition to several formal/standardized tests) was a digit-naming speed assessment. The children were asked to say the names of 48 digits (1, 5, 8, 2, 4, 3) repeated eight times in semi-random order. These digits were printed in six rows of eight items on a single, white laminated sheet. The children were asked to say the digit names as quickly as they could without making mistakes. Time to name the items on each trial was recorded using a stopwatch.

The children were also assessed using phonological awareness. The orally administered Auditory Analysis Test was shortened for this sample, and consisted of 23 items in which last consonants, or first or second consonants of an initial consonant blend, were to be deleted and the resulting word pronounced. For example, the child was asked to "Say block." After saying the word, the experimenter said, "Now say it without the /b/." The number of correct deletions was the childen's score. Phonological awareness (phoneme deletion) and digit-naming speed were consistently related to speed and errors on initial reading of a text and on reading it for the fourth time.

The children especially enjoyed the rereading tasks assigned while participating in the study. Especially noted was the pride and pleasure the poorer readers expressed when both their graphed time and errors decreased. The second story was usually read during the first session if time permitted. The other stories were read during a second session a day or two later. On rare occasions a third session was required. After controlling for word-recognition skill, only digit-naming speed contributed significant additional variance to reading speed before and especially after practice, even over more than a two year period. Such independent relationship to fluency suggested that current theories stressing the role of phonemic sensitivity in fluent as well as accurate reading need to be modified to include the role of processes indexed by simple symbol-naming speed. The author stated that it did not seem to matter whether the unit was a letter, a digit, a word, or connected text. There may be a limiting factor to how quickly a person can access the name code for visual material.

Compton (1997) applied the Spear-Swerling and Sternberg model of reading disability to give teachers and clinicians a set of materials to use with readers who are at different developmental stages of word recognition. The author described four distinct patterns of reading disability (RD), each of which is intended to represent a departure from normal reading development at one of the normal word recognition phases. The four patterns of RD are as follows: (1) The nonalphabetic readers, who have no knowledge of grapheme-phoneme correspondence rules and rely heavily on visual cues to recognize words; (2) the compensatory readers, who have limited phonic skills and rely heavily on compensatory abilities; (3) nonautomatic readers, who have decoding skills that are effortful and not automatic; and (4) the delayed readers who have automatic word recognition skills but who lag behind cohorts in the acquistion of higher level comprehension skills.

The authors emphasized that the materials were intended to be used with more traditional types of assessment tools such as reading inventories, oral reading samples, and miscue analysis in order to allow practitioners to accurately gauge children's developmental phase of word recognition and determine if this phase of development is significantly outside the normal range. The author cautioned that the developmental phases are approximate representations of entire behaviors exhibited by a large portion of a particular population.

In assessing children suspected to be in the visual-cue phase, the authors stressed that examiners should use a variety of materials and tasks. The basic battery for assessing children in the initial phase (preschool and kindergarten children) is first, phonemic awareness which includes recognition and manipulation of the sounds contained in words. Second, children are assessed to determine their awareness of logos which include common environmental signs and logos (e.g., soda companies, fast food chains, soup cans, etc). Third, children should display a knowledge of letter names and sounds which includes matching, recognition, and identification of letters names and sounds. Finally, basic sight word vocabulary (the first words from the Dolch sight word list) and high-frequency words from the children's environment are important components of this assessment battery.

The assessment battery for the second phase (first- and second-grade children) includes phonemic awareness, letter names and sounds, and basic sight words. In addition, children in this second phase need to be assessed also on their use of regular words. Regular words are those that conform to standard letter-sound relationships (e.g., had). In addition these children should be familiar with irregular words. Irregular words are those that do not obey standard letter-sound relationships (e.g., one). Finally, it is important to assess the children's knowledge of visually confusable words which includes words with similar spellings that are often confused (e.g., form and from).

The assessment battery for the third phase (second through fourth grade children) includes basic sight words, regular words, irregular words, and visually confusable words. The last assessment in this phase is the simple nonword which are pronounceable spelling patterns that are not real words (e.g., git, chove, fleach). These nonwords are created by changing one or two letters of phonetically regular words.

The authors stated that nonautomatic readers need more than anything practice in reading to build word recognition fluency. This should take place both in school and whenever possible at home. Reading materials should be carefully chosen to allow the nonautomatic reader the opportunity to read fluently. In general, fluent reading should be defined as reading at a rate of at least 100 words per minute with less than five percent errors. In addition, nonautomatic readers often benefited from advanced instruction in phonics. Advanced phonics instructions focused on helping readers recognize and use larger more advanced letter clusters, and recognize prefixes and suffixes.

Tancock (1994) presented a lesson framework that combined productive instructional components with the flexibility necessary for addressing individual children's interests and needs. She worked with preservice elementary education majors, who taught reading to low-achieving children in an after-school tutoring program at the university reading clinic. Tancock (1994) developed the lesson framework based on her experience working with children and supervising tutors n several university-based reading clinics, experiences as a Reading Recovery teacher, her knowledge of whole-language philosophy, and her faith in a literature-based reading instruction.

The author shared her view that children need the support of predictable reading materials to help in their reading. She believes that controlled vocabulary tends to diminish predictability, reading materials should be authentic, meaningful whole texts. She stated that she believes that literacy develops from whole to part, all reading in her lesson framework was done in complete texts. The author shared her belief that tutors should focus on students' strengths and plan lessons that build on these strengths. An overview of the literacy lesson framework included familiar reading for fluency for approximately five minutes, and guided reading for approximately 30 minutes. The guided reading was described as a before reading activity that generated prereading questions, introducing the book, or making predictions. After guided reading the author implemented an activity during the reading such as the Directed Reading-Thinking Activity. As a postreading activity she encouraged answering prereading questions; evaluating predictions or clarifying, extending, or refining thinking about the story. The lesson included writing such as writing sentences and cutting them up, and process writing for about 15 minutes. In addition, word sorting was important and book sharing was implemented for five minutes each.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1990) believed that the best nonthreatening and informal advice that any teacher could give any parent, regardless of the grade or ability of their child, was that parents should read to their children. The authors felt quite strongly about this advice for several reasons. First, reading to children was a relatively easy, inexpensive, enjoyable, and rewarding activity for both parents and children. It required very little time, training or explanation. Second, reading aloud was one of the most effective techniques for promoting growth in reading. Children who were read to by their parents were exposed to a wide range of vocabulary; they developed an internal sense of story and understood that reading was a process of getting meaning from written symbols. The authors stated that every child's best role model for reading, was their parents because a child understood the value of reading by observing its value and usefulness in their mother and father's daily lives. In addition, reading offered more of a closeness than watching television together, playing games, or traveling in the car. Even for older children reading aloud was very appropriate. According to the authors, one of the biggest mistakes that parents make is to quit reading aloud when children enter the middle grades and upper grades. The authors believed that the secret was to match materials to interest and maturity levels of the children.

The authors recommended that teachers and principals frequently communicate and encourage parents to read to their children through notes home, on school stationery, in the school newsletter, on signs in the school, and throughout the community, at school assemblies and during parent-teacher conferences. They recommended the following tips for successful read-alouds to parents: make read-aloud part of a routine, use good reading materials, connect read alouds to family experiences, talk about what was read, and be a good model of reading. Poor readers especially need a good role model because they are often placed in reading groups where the primary models for reading are the other poor readers in the group. By reading expressively and with attention to punctuation and phrasing, parents, grandparents, and siblings can demonstrate good reading to children. At times asking the child to read-aloud with them will help the child move toward more fluent reading.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) offered their second "best reading advice for parents." This research focused on the school context for literacy instruction, and equally as important, the home environments for reading and writing. The authors encouraged the parents to create home environments that promoted reading and writing. The authors felt that it was very important to create environments at home and at school in which children have a rich variety of reading and writing materials for real purposes in their lives and to see their peers and the adults in their lives model literacy.

The authors shared many ways that parents can help set an environment at home that promotes literacy growth. They suggested that parents need to find a time and a place for reading with a large stock of appropriate reading materials. To obtain an abundance of reading material for all family members, they suggested using school book clubs, trading magazines and books between families, and visiting the community or the school libraries. Rasinski and Fredericks (1991) felt it is important to allow children to observe their parents or older siblings read in order to show children the many ways and instances parents used reading. Some of the ways parents can make reading relevant to their children is to allow them to see their parents in reading situations such as entertaining, maintaining a job, talking about what is read with the children, and connecting reading with family experiences. The authors also encouraged plenty of writing supplies that were accessible for relevant writing opportunities.

According to Edward (1995) one program called Parents as Partners in Reading influenced the ways in which a group of low-income mothers assisted other low-income mothers and fathers. These appreciative parents shared books with their children after the program developer was no longer actively involved in monitoring the book-reading program.

In contrast to the university leader, the parent leaders encouraged their peers to bring their children at each phase of the book-reading program. The parent leaders did not seem overly concerned that the other parents would feel too embarrassed and insecure to read or attempt to read to their children. The parent leaders involved children from the outset and provided feedback to their peers in front of the entire group. The book-reading program developed by the parent leaders was loosely structured, interest driven, and did not correlate to specific lessons taught by the teachers.

The author described a group of parent participants and parent leaders who did not seem to feel that someone blamed them for not knowing how to read to their children. These parent participants and parent leaders were satisfied that someone had finally made clear to them exactly what the school expected of them. One parent wished that she had known the importance of reading to her children sooner. She would have read to her older child, also. The authors stated that the empowerment parents can experience goes beyond learning more about reading aloud to their children.

O'Masta and Wolf (1991) stated that a school wide project to read one million minutes was used to promote several strategies and activities that increased motivation to read. Also, momentum to reach the school-wide goal of a million minutes was accomplished by using charts and newsletters posted in each classroom. In addition, they were posted in the school lobby to allow parents, students, and visitors to see the progress that was made toward the targeted amount of reading. Newsletters were sent home to communicate with parents, provide ideas and suggestions for promoting reading at home and report progress toward the goal. Colorful posters were displayed during parent-teacher conferences that emphasized the importance of reading. Parents and students were allowed to use the library before and after school. Student leaders from the sixth grade served as the school's "bookkeepers" and tallied the minutes each month. In addition, the School Advisory Committee and teachers generated many ideas to maintain motivation such as students designing and making bookmarks and posters of their favorite books. To celebrate the efforts and achievement of the children, each student received a school pendant at a school-wide pizza party, funded by the Parent-Teacher Organization.

The school goal of reading one million minutes was achieved with all students participating in and contributing to the project. An additional objective was met as 100 percent of the teachers noted an increase in the amount of reading children had completed at home. Also, a positive attitude toward reading was accomplished and positive parent-child interactions were observed. This project seemed to arrest the decline in reading that occurred nationally as students reached intermediate grades. Fourth and fifth grades averaged over two hours of independent reading each week with sixth graders reading over six hours per week. The findings from the project were encouraging and demonstrated that the amount of reading children engaged in at home could be readily increased. They were particularly pleased with the partnership that developed between home and school during this study.

Lee and Croninger (1994) stated that literacy is more than reading; rather it involves a wide range of cultural practices and activities. The purpose of the study was to identify conditions in the home and school environments of two groups of children those from poor families and those from middle class families. The authors wanted to understand what particular conditions were subject to change that were associated with a reduced learning disadvantage for poor eighth graders. The sample for this study was drawn from the base year of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88), a general-purpose study of the educational status and progress of about 25,000 eighth-grade students in 1,035 American middle-grade schools, sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics.

On every home support measure considered the authors found that middle-class children were favored. Compared to poor children, those from middle-class families have more educated parents, have mothers who expect them to go farther in school, make more use of the public library, have more resources in the home that are related to literacy, and spend more time discussing matters related to school with their families. While schools need to encourage parents to involve themselves in the school and in their children's learning the findings suggested that more effort should be directed toward involving the children of poor parents, who typically wait for an approach from the school to become involved. As children advance in age and grade, the parents may have increasing difficult actually helping their children with school assignments. The most straightforward finding was that if English teachers assigned more books to read in their classes (in addition to the text), their students were likely to better comprehend what they have read. This finding was consistent with the fact these students need books and reading materials in their home. The authors suggested that teachers encourage students to construct (rather than reproduce) knowledge. The authors support a move away from homogeneous instruction, but they encouraged a simultaneous approach to remediation that directs more school resources to children most in need. The authors' findings also suggested that teachers were an important factor and influence in developing literacy in middle school students

There is a consistent thread running through the results of this study. Middle-grade schools where learning is unseparated by ability or social background, where high-level instruction is the norm, where students and teachers are socially engaged in cooperative endeavors toward learning these schools seem to have high levels of literacy development and where learning is distributed equally.

Solution Strategy

One of the writer's main goals was to improve third and fourth grade students' reading skills. A vital thread that ran throughout this intervention program was to give these 24 third and fourth grade students a purpose and a vision for literacy that would motivate them to create meaning. One method of achieving this goal was to increase the students' interest, appreciation, response, respect and enjoyment of literature (Koyra, 1997; Strickland, 1990; Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1997; McCormick and Becker, 1996; Vandervelden and Siegel, 1997; Tancock, 1994). This writer was conscious of the fact that learning to read and write were interrelated processes that developed in connection with oral language. In order to increase these students' reading skills, the writer planned instruction that connected the language processes - listening, reading, speaking, and writing in an interdependent manner, informing and supporting each other (Strickland, 1990).

The writer implemented repeated reading, read aloud (at times with different tones of voice), choral reading, echo reading, shared reading, guided reading, paired reading, and independent reading. Also, to help the students who were in need of extra help, this intervention used one-on-one tutoring, peer tutoring, and cross-age tutoring (Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley, 1996; Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson and Watts, 1997; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1997; Reese, 1996; Tancock, 1994). These reading methods were used in a stimulating and enriching literature-based environment (Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley, 1996; Senechal, LaFevre, Hudson, and Lawson, 1996; Zimmerman, 1990; Palmer and Codling, 1996; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1997; McCormick and Becker, 1996; Tancock, 1994). The writer facilitated learning as these third and fourth grade students became active participants in the learning process (Strickland, 1990). The students were encouraged to construct their own knowledge rather than reproduce it (knowledge) (Lee and Croninger, 1994). In addition, the writer built a new knowledge base on the foundation of the students' prior knowledge and experience (Strickland, 1990). The third and fourth grade students became a responsive literary community in the classroom (Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Palmer and Codling, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1997).

The classroom teacher (along with the writer) had an important role in increasing the students' reading skills. The classroom teacher provided the necessary support, time, flexibility and reinforcement vital to the intervention instruction and overall program. The classroom teacher along with the writer modeled a love for literacy (Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson, and Watts, 1997; Palmer and Codling, 1994; Lee and Croninger, 1994; Searfoss, 1997). The writer assisted the classroom teacher in setting up a print-rich classroom environment. The writer introduced literature that was appropriate for each individual student's reading level and interest. This print-rich classroom motivated these third and fourth grade students to read for pleasure and ownership (Strickland, 1990; Rasinski and Fredericks, 1991; McCormick and Becker, 1996). During this intervention, the writer and the classroom teacher continually reinforced the four powerful aspects of literacy that included prior knowledge with books, social interactions about books, book access and book choice (Palmer and Codling, 1994; Tancock, 1994; Baumann and Ivey, 1997).

Another main focus that the writer used was to help these third and fourth grade students discover how grand and powerful and wonderful learning to read can be (Searfoss, 1997). The writer as a reflective researcher constructed and implemented an intervention program that promoted literature while concurrently developing skills, strategies and vocabulary. This combination approach led to reading achievements and a love for literacy (Searfoss, 1997; Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Morrow and Tracey, 1997; Zimmermann, 1990; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Flood and Lapp, 1997; Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley, 1996; Reese, 1996). In addition, various balanced approaches based on sound theories were used (Flood and Lapp, 1997; Baumann and Ivey, 1997).

All word recognition skills, word identification skills and strategies including beginning and advanced phonics (phonemic awareness, phonemic segmentation, manipulation of sounds, decoding, recoding, letter-sound identification, rime deletion and substitutions, rhyming, prefixes and suffixes) were taught with explicit instruction while using whole-words and contextual experiences that were enjoyable (Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Morrow and Tracey, 1997; Brett, Rothlein, and Hurley, 1996; Zimmermann, 1990; Flood and Lapp, 1997; Tancock, 1994; Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson and Watts, 1997; Salembier and Cheng, 1997; Senchal, LaFevre, Hudson and Lawson, 1996). It was the writer's goal to empower these third and fourth grade students by increasing their reading skills and abilities (Vandervelden and Siegel, 1997).

Some lessons were structured and detailed. Other lessons were brief and impromptu. The writer creatively connected the literature and the instruction in such a way that it corresponded to the students' changing needs and abilities

(Strickland, 1990; Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Flood and Lapp, 1994; Tancock, 1994). Fluency was also increased as these students reread and revisited familiar text and tools necessary to become better readers (Bowers, 1993; Tancock, 1994; Compton, 1997).

The writer endeavored to be sensitive to the students' various developmental stages of word recognition (Compton, 1997). In addition, the writer was aware of the students' psychological, linguistic, and social needs as well as their cognitive needs. Therefore, another important facet of the intervention was to encourage and celebrate all large and small achievements the students made (Strickland, 1990). In order to accomplish this goal, it was important for the writer to focus on the students' strengths and plan lessons that built on these strengths (Tancock, 1994). Attitude and enthusiasm were of upmost importance in this intervention (Baumann and Ivey, 1997).

Another goal of this writer was to increase the third and fourth grade students' knowledge of a sense of story (story structure) and an author's craft in writing good literature. The students learned to become attentive to an "audience" by participating cooperatively in reading, writing, role-playing, drama, pantomiming, drawing, and numerous other literacy experiences (Searfoss, 1997; Baumann and Ivey, 1997; Morrow and Tracey, 1997; Zimmermann, 1990; Taylor, Hanson, Justice-Swanson, and Watts, 1997; Flood and Lapp, 1997; Vandervelden and Siegel, 1997).

A vital facet of this intervention was to include the parents of these 24 third and fourth grade students. The writer did not propose to structure the parental involvement. Rather, it was the writer's hope that the parents would become empowered through a knowledge of the importance of reading aloud to their children every day (Rasinski and Fredericks, 1990; Edwards, 1995). Ongoing communication with parents was a goal of this writer (O'Masta and Wolf, 1991). The writer also encouraged parent(s) to set up a literacy environment in their homes that supported the school's efforts to help their children (Rasinski and Fredericks, 1991). A bridge of unity, support, and understanding between the child, the parent(s), the writer and the classroom teacher was an important aspect of this intervention (Edwards, 1995; Lee and Croninger, 1994).

CHAPTER III

Method

Prior to implementing the intervention program, written permission was requested from the school district. Permission was granted over the phone to the principal. Written permission was also requested and granted by the principal (Appendix D:151), the classroom teacher (Appendix E:155) and the parents of the children in grades three and four (Appendix F:159). Parents and their children were free to reject involvement in the program. The parents could also request that the participating child's results not be reported. All teachers and other students interacting with these students were well informed of the program and given the same freedom as the parent and child. Prior to implementation a writer-created teacher survey for the first, second, and third grade levels was distributed and collected by the Reading Specialist. Written permission was requested for the survey questions taken from another source (Appendix G: 161). The writer was responsible to analyze the data. Prior to implementation, the writer also requested permission from the classroom teacher to administer the Slosson Oral Reading Test- Revised (SORT-R) to each student. Also, a writer-created attitude/concept survey and a writer-created simple checklist to assess each student's approximate stage of reading fluency was administered. The classroom teacher joined with the writer in the 12-week reading intervention program to develop reading skills in the students. The teacher was responsible to communicate with the parents to create an awareness of the 12-week intervention program for their children. The teacher and the writer collaborated to write a creative letter to the parents concerning a meeting during the first week of implementation. The focus of the meeting was to request cooperation and support for the scheduled intervention. The writer's goal was to inform the parents (of the third and fourth grade students) of the importance of reading aloud to their children and providing a setting for literacy in their homes. The classroom teacher was responsible to call and remind each parent prior to the meeting. The teacher was also responsible for obtaining approval from administration and the building supervisor for the scheduled evening meetings. The teacher and the writer welcomed the parents' advice and recommendations concerning the scheduling of all future meetings during implementation.

Prior to implementation, the writer guided the classroom teacher in establishing a print rich environment including a classroom library. This classroom library included new books that the students had not read. The purpose of the library was to motivate these students to develop an ownership for reading. Also, new reading charts and reading logs were set up in the classroom. The students were responsible to record their books (with help at times) during the reading project. This developed responsibility and ownership in the students during the reading program.

A variety of print materials was used in this intervention program such as a collection of trade books of varying sizes and reading levels including multiple picture books, trade books, series books and wordless picture books. Also, children's magazines, poetry books, predictable books, environmental print, and games were used. These high interest trade books encompassed a wide variety of genres including fiction and nonfiction. The literature was checked out of the school's media center and resource room. In addition the writer's large collection of trade books was used. Writing materials used in this intervention included reading logs, writing paper, bright poster paper, construction paper, pencils, pens, crayons, glue, paints, and markers. The writer purchased an array of stickers, certificates, cookies, fun pencils, trade books and other novelty incentives to reward accomplishments. The writer also purchased the Slosson Oral Reading Test- Revised material. The writer spent approximately 125 dollars. In addition, small and large index cards, paper bags, scissors, plastic eggs and spiral bindings were used in the project. A Marshmallow (Easter Egg) Treat recipe was used which needed the following: multi-colored Rice Krispies Cereal, spoons, bowl, wax paper, butter, marshmallows, a hot plate and paper towels. Equipment needed in this inexpensive intervention included a computer, a video, a VHS machine, a television, a filmstrip, a projector and a book binding machine. In addition, a writer collection of inexpensive (small) generic bean bag puppets/prompts were used which included: a butterfly, a lady bug, a porpoise, several bright fishes, a caterpillar, and a cricket to coordinate with trade books read. Also, a Rainbow Fish finger puppet was used. For the awards dinner, personal trophies, certificates, and decorations were purchased by the school. Several hundred cookies and several hotel gift packages were donated by a supportive mother's place of business. These hotel gift packages were traded by the teacher for 30 pizzas and 50 dollars from a local business. Recognition was given for these contributions by the writer, the teacher and the students. Salads and drinks were purchased from the school cafeteria. The targeted school contributed approximately 225 dollars to the 12-week intervention program. The teacher and the writer purchased a toy gift certificate as an additional award for an exceptional student.

The writer met with the students in their classroom for one hour a day the majority of the time. At times, usually on the third day, the teacher arranged an hour and a half reading/activity time. The program's focus was to foster a print-rich, fun environment that motivated these students to participate and respond to literacy. The program was implemented during the students' scheduled reading time. The classroom teacher reinforced the intervention program by supporting and modeling a love of literacy. In addition, the classroom teacher included reading/writing strategies, aspects and approaches of the intervention program to the daily class routine.

This 12-week intervention was different from any standard procedures at this setting. This was an "intervention" that enabled a " volunteer" to go into a classroom setting. This intervention united the classroom teacher, the volunteer/writer, parents, and the students for the common good of each below-grade level reader. This school began a "pull-out" commercial instruction program using para-professionals in the fall of 1997. This "pull-out" remedial program is called Early Success (grades kindergarten through two). In addition, in the fall of 1997-98 school year, the school began using a reading "buddy" program. This county-wide reading program is called Rocking Readers (kindergarten through second grade). The senior citizens from a local church spend time reading with an individual child to help the child improve reading. Also, an Accelerated Reader's Program uses the computer to test the reader's comprehension and progress (through grade five).

In contrast, this 12-week intervention program was writer-constructed for the low reading skills of the students in the lowest third and fourth grade level. The program was geared to the students' abilities, not the students' abilities geared to the program. Therefore, the main focus was to provide students with numerous opportunities to succeed and to enjoy reading. It was the writer's desire that as the students became more confident readers, their reading skills would increase.

The instructional format included the first day of reading for pleasure and enjoyment while promoting responsive literature discussions. At all times, the writer used various methods to build from the students' prior knowledge such as displaying and sharing items and/or materials that related to the stories read. Open-ended questions and discussions about personal experiences were also used to make the students feel confident and comfortable about the books read. The second day involved rereading the trade book using choral and/or echo reading, individual, and/or pair reading. The writer introduced and built strategies into the lessons to contextualize the information. The third day included rereading and revisiting the literature, practicing the strategies, and using activities to assess the students' understanding of the knowledge introduced. The approximate cycle included introducing, connecting, and building literature and reading skills with activities. The classroom teacher allowed the students to read and write in conjunction with the intervention instruction. During the second week of implementation, the writer changed the reading intervention approach to support additional student "active participation." This method was increased to further motivate students with specific learning disabilities, individual cognitive, linguistic, social and psychological needs, in addition to students' varying energy levels, and attention spans. The writer noticed that when the class role-played, responded orally, read, looked at and/or handled books, and/or played with finger puppets that the cooperation, unity, learning, and motivation level among the students increased. In other words, active paticipation and cooperative learning seemed to unity the students and caused them to become more motivated as they learned from each other. Other minor changes were made to accommodate the students, the classroom teacher, and the writer/volunteer's schedules. Also, during the intervention, the writing time was increased to accommodate students' needs and abilities to structure a sentence/sentences and/or a story. In addition, minor changes were made to adjust to school wide standardized testing for the Stanford Achievment Test.

Week One: Reading for Pleasure and Vocabulary

During the first day of implementation, the writer and the students participated in shared reading of the classic story, The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Potter, 1995). The writer displayed a basket of fresh garden vegetables and blackberries to pique curiosity. Briefly, the title, the author, and the illustrator were introduced and written on a small marker board. After reading, the writer encouraged the students to participate in a literature discussion group. The writer asked open-ended questions to discover student attitudes and feelings about the story and its relevancy to their lives. The writer discussed and modeled the concept of interactive vocabulary to be used throughout the 12-week intervention. In addition, the reading incentive project was introduced. The students were given a "voice" in selecting the number of books to be read during the 12- week intervention program. A literacy pizza celebration was announced as an incentive at the end of the 12-week program.

On day two, the students briefly retold the title, author, and story read previously. The writer read aloud a new story from The Children's Book of Virtues (Bennett, 1995). The writer paced the reading displaying the illustrations. The students shared relevant personal experiences and responses to the literature, and the vocabulary. The third day of intervention, the writer read, The Rainbow Fish (Pfister, 1992) using shared reading. The writer modeled good literature, and added a "voice" for each character. A volunteer student role-played the main character with a coordinating finger puppet as the story was reread. Interactive vocabulary and word banks were demonstrated as the concept of a moral (lesson) was introduced. In a cooperative group discussion, the students compared all three stories according to authors, characters, vocabularies, and morals. Lastly, small groups role-played their favorite stories in front of the class using impromptu prompts.

Week Two: Sense of Story, Author's Craft

On day one, the writer revisited the importance of authors and titles using trade books previously read. The writer used shared reading to introduce a new, big, predictable book, Good Night Owl (Hutchins, 1972), as several students took turns holding the book. Using this book, the writer modeled the author's craft (the skill in which the author develops and presents his/her unique style of writing), and the illustrator's role in correlating good literature. A group discussion followed. Next, half of the room chorally reread the story as the other half listened and vice versa. The writer used a "think aloud" activity on the board to reinforce the concept of using interactive vocabulary from a word bank. Students collaborated on "word bank" meanings and shared personal sentences applicable to the words with the class. The writer and the teacher assessed the students' understanding.

On day two, using familiar books, the writer and the students reviewed (briefly) the previous day's focus of instruction. A sense of story or literary elements (the setting, the plot, the theme, and the characters), were added to the students' prior knowledge. Then half of the class chorally reread the big book emphasizing an expressive reading "voice" for the characters (as modeled by the writer) while the other half listened and vice versa. A sense of story was also discussed using the predictable book. In addition, the writer modeled context clues by using the author's text and illustrations in the story for clues. Next, each student shared one of their favorite books focusing on the author and the title. Then, a writer-created interactive "matching game" was played which included flashcards of characters, authors, titles, quotes and "word bank" vocabularies from three familiar stories. Each student "won" game cards as he/she successfully constructed meaning.

On day three, the students were given a "voice" in choosing a video for "fun day." The students chose to watch, The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny (Potter, 1993). This video reinforced the trade book and presented a drama about their favorite author Beatrix Potter, her personal life, and the inspiration for her characters. Next, the writer distributed the typed text to the story, Good Night Owl (Hutchins, 1972). In a small group, volunteer students rotated to reread the story with expression as "actors" in a play. Other students chose to chorally reread the story to the "actors" with the writer. Then the writer read a new short trade book, The Surprise Party (Leach, 1993). The writer covered the front and the back of the book with a book cover. The students were asked to listen and respond to the story without viewing the cover, or the illustrations. Next, the students became illustratrators of their favorite part(s) of this story using texture, color, and creativity. The students wrote the author's title but created their own illustrations to share with the class. Next, each student "illustrator" was given a sticker and their art work was displayed. In addition, the students selected a classroom library book to read.

Week Three: Poems and Phonics

On the first and second day of intervention, the writer displayed a tea party (complete with teacups, a teapot, tablecloth and cookies) to stimulate interest during the reading of a humorous short poem, "I Asked a Tiger to Tea" (Eastwick, 1994). The writer asked open-ended questions in relation to the poem. The large (typed) text was taped across the board as the writer reread the poem to model expression and enthusiasm. The class read and reread the poem echoing and modeling the writer's tone. Next, students volunteered to reread the poem individually in front of the class. The students practiced phonics skills by underlining rhyming words (using colorful markers), decoding and recoding words. Interactive vocabulary was discussed. Context clues were demonstrated to the class as the writer role-played a dectective looking for clues in the text and illustrations in the poem using a writer-created picture file. An animal cookie was given to each student as a part of the tea party. On day two, student volunteers continued to reread the poem to the class focusing on expression, puntuation, and enthusiasm. The concepts of "audience" and "reader" roles were introduced. The "audience" was encouraged to applaud the efforts of each "reader" and together they were challenged to become a supportive "community of readers." On the board, the students practiced phonics skills by brainstorming to create familiar rhyming words, (such as "ink", "pink", "blink", "slink", and "mink"), emphasizing the importance of the identification, location, and manipulation of the sounds/letters in words (such as the beginning, middle, and end). Then using game-like instruction, the writer modeled a rhyming flip book using word families (-ur,-or, -at,-ug). Then volunteer students shared their rhyming flip books made from index cards with the class. Students advanced in phonics tutored the least knowledgeable students. Using magnetic letters on a metal cookie sheet, the writer demonstrated breaking large words into small parts and reinforced rime deletion and substitution.

On day three of the intervention, volunteer students continued to reread the poem as the writer reminded the "reader" and the "audience" of their roles. In addition, volunteer students continued to share their flip books. An awareness of the importance of good listening skills was introduced and developed. The students were asked to listen with "radar ears." In a game-like fashion, the class listened for all rhyming words, but especially those word families not previously used. The children were praised for listening and discovering new words. The students selected a sticker to place on their flip books. The students also recited familiar nursery rhymes, commercial jingles, and/or poems. Then the students participated in locating poems in children's magazines, or familiar books and reading them in front of the room with coaching from the teacher, the writer, or cross-age (more skilled readers in fourth grade helping less skilled readers in the third grade) or peer tutors. A brief, spontaneous lesson was given on the concept of contractions, prefixes and suffixes found in the poems. For pleasure, the writer also read two poems from A Children's Book of Virtures (Bennett,1995) concerning courage and perservance. One additional poem was used to reinforce the teacher's theme of the month.

Week Four: Author Study

On the first day of intervention, the writer began by talking about the life of highlighted author, Eric Carle. Other familiar authors were revisted. The writer read aloud The Very Busy Spider (Carle, 1984) focusing on the author's style of writing and the illustrations to the story. In a responsive discussion group, the students compared two familiar authors: Beatrix Potter and Eric Carle.

On the second day of intervention, the writer read, The Very Lonely Firefly (Carle,1995) for pleasure. The writer activated prior knowledge by revisiting a sense of story, the author's craft, the illustrator's role, and expressive reading. In addition, phonics skills, context clues, and interactive vocabulary were briefly reviewed using the trade book. Each student selected a favorite familiar book by Eric Carle. Then the class divided into small groups and each student took turns reading one page at a time in front of the class for pleasure. A volunteer student introduced another book by Eric Carle, The Very Hungry Caterpillar (1994) and read aloud to the class for enjoyment. In addition, students were given independent reading time to select from a variety of books (displayed in the classroom) written by the highlighted author to foster appreciation.

On day three of this week, the students participated in a writer-created Interactive Egg Game (Appendix H :163) to review previous lessons. The writer displayed a box of colorful eggs to arouse the students' curiosity. Each student selected a colorful plastic egg. Upon opening the egg, a "surprise" request was read and performed by each student. Each "egg" challenged the students to either role-play, pantomine, recall, reread, or retell a story. Other requests included describing a character, a setting, an author, an illustrator, or interactive vocabulary from favorite, familiar books read during the intervention. In addition, other activities included: students role-playing a teacher demonstrating their knowledge of reading skills and/or strategies such as context clues, or beginning and/or advanced phonic skills. Each child was surprised with a box of animal cookies as a reward.

Week Five: Sight Words,Vocabularies and Recipes

On day one, the writer encouraged each student to share a cooking experience. The writer used guided reading asking open-ended questions before, during and after the lesson. The writer read aloud a short trade book, The Polly Pocket Cookbook (Albert, 1996), with recipes as part of its content, rules of cooking etiquette, and cooking measurements. The writer demonstrated the measurements using baking utensils. The students chorally reread a recipe that had been typed by the writer using large text. The writer modeled and reinforced phonics skills and context clues using words from the recipe content. Compound words were briefly discussed.

On day two, each child received a Frye Instant sight word list. The students were divided into two groups: one group worked with the classroom teacher outdoors while the other group worked with the writer in the Reading Center. The writer's group was challenged to read with an "Attitude" (of confidence) and enthusiasm as modeled by the writer. Each student was applauded as they monitored and corrected themselves while reading the sight word list. The students reread the recipe using ehco reading with the writer. The students were also given an Instant Frye sight word list to practice at home.

On day three, the students were divided into two small groups by the teacher. One group self-selected favorite, familiar books to read individually or in turns for pleasure with the classroom teacher. At the same time, the writer demonstrated the importance of sight words in reading for fluency with the other group. Using another trade book, Cookie Soup (Muntean, 1990), the writer circled all Frye's Instant sight words with a dark marker and read them expressively. The writer created flashcards of the sight word list, and in a game-like fashion, the students were asked to quickly say and claim the words as they took turns observing each flashcard. Then the students used "their" cards to play the game with other students. Next, the writer demonstrated the importance of a good sight word vocabulary in everyday life using environmental print and circling familiar words. Then each student volunteered to read environmental text that was relevant to his/her everyday life. (The writer reviewed contextual phonics skills for those still needing extra help). The students took turns reading the list of sight words with "Attitude" (of confidence) and received stickers as a reward. Later, the teacher and the writer rotated groups.

Week Six: Review with Books and Games

Mid way through the intervention on day one, the students discussed favorite literature that they were reading at home to encourage other students to read. Next, each student was given a "voice" and encouraged to respond freely to the questions: "What is your favorite part of this new reading program so far? What do you not like? How can we improve the program?" The writer listened and also made notes. Next, the students selected and reread favorite familiar books or poems for pleasure either independently or in pairs.

On day two, volunteer students and/or small groups of students, chose familiar trade books to reread aloud to the class. The students modeled good oral reading techniques. The students participated in a writer-created game focusing on matching students' favorite authors with trade books. Then the students recalled favorite stories focusing on a sense of story.

On day three, the teacher and the writer teamed to create a "Razzle Dazzle" Marshmallow Treat (Easter Egg) snack. The students chorally reread the recipe with the writer to the teacher/baker. The teacher allowed each student to pour, stir, mix, add, count and/or beat to create the colorful marshmallow treats. The writer asked the students to think of rhyming words and math knowledge as the recipe was being doubled. Sight words were revisted. The treat was enjoyed by all. In addition, the writer read aloud a short story from a Highlight Magazine for enjoyment.

Week Seven: SCUBA-D: Connecting the Implementation

Prior to the lesson, the writer and the teacher created a bulletin board depicting a scuba diver and an ocean scene in relation to reading to stimulate the the students' interest. On day one, the writer encouraged the class to share their scuba diving and ocean experiences and an announcement was made that the class would have a special visitor. The classroom teacher dressed as a scuba diver (using a diving suit, mask, flippers, snorkel, and scuba bag) and entered the classroom. Using this gear, the teacher encouraged the students to become knowledgable of a scuba diver. The teacher demonstrated and explained what a diver does in the depth of the ocean. The teacher also shared personal experiences and what the acronym for SCUBA meant. The students responded and shared more experiences as they examined the scuba gear. The teacher selected the (series) book, The Magic Schoolbus On the Ocean Floor (Cole, 1992). The teacher read aloud as the students followed along with multiple copies.

On day two, the writer and the students reviewed the relevancy of the scuba diver's goal in the ocean to each student's reading goal. Rereading the book, volunteer students modeled good oral reading techniques. The writer presented and modeled the SCUBA-D reading strategy to the class using information from the ocean/scuba diver bullentin board and a writing board. Next, the students were asked to share personal reading experiences and to explain the strategy in their own words to help create meaning. The students were reminded that they were currently using many of the SCUBA-D strategies.

On day three, the classroom teacher selected a Magic Bus On the Ocean Floor (Cole, 1994) filmstrip to reinforce learning. The students were allowed to read the text with the filmstrip or follow in their books. Questions with multiple choices were answered as a group at the end of the filmstrip. Next, the writer role-played a media specialist allowing the students to enjoy a personal collection of trade books. In addition, the students were allowed to select from a variety of Magic School Bus (Joanna Cole) series books displayed in the classroom. The writer also reviewed the students' reading logs, and passed out stickers for books read to be placed on the reading chart. The writer encouraged each child to continue to read for pleasure and to achieve the reading incentive of 50 books. The writer distributed the SCUBA-D strategy for the students to practice at home.

Week Eight - Read Alouds, Responses, and Relationships

On day one, the writer read aloud a longer book with smaller print, the fairy tale, Thumbelina (De La Touche, 1996). The writer and the students reviewed previous lessons primarily focusing on the SCUBA-D reading strategy. The students were divded into two groups. Each child demonstated to the teacher or writer that he/she had created meaning (not memorized) the strategy by applying the knowledge while reading or teaching other students how to read an unknown word in a self-selected book. Each student was rewarded by selecting either a novelty pencil or a chocolate "gold coin". On day two, the students volunteered to reread Thumbelina (De La Touche, 1996) using multiple copies of the trade book. Impromptu contextual phonics used as target words were sounded out by drumming on the desks in unison with the syllables the students were hearing. Then the students discussed favorite tradebooks read during the intervention program. On the board, the writer and the students brainstormed to complete a venn diagram comparing/contrasting The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Potter, 1995) and Thumbelina (De La Touche, 1996).

On day three, the writer started rereading Thumbelina (De La Touche, 1996) for pleasure stopping at intervals and allowing students to finish a sentence(s) or page(s). The students and the writer selected and discussed interactive vocabulary. The writer modeled three types of sentences on the board highlighting the correct punctuation and capital letters with colored markers. The writer also guided the students into correct punctuation usage by illustrating with bright, large cut-out punctuation signs taped to the board. Next, the writer read sentences from the story text using different "voice" expressions for each punctuation mark. The students were challenged to select the punctuation mark that made sense for each sentence. Later, each student wrote a sentence about the story using correct punctuation. The teacher, peer tutors, cross-age tutors and the writer were available to help. Next, each student read their sentence using enthusiam and an "Attitude" (of confidence) to the class. The writer and the classroom teacher observed the students as they demonstrated prior and new knowledge. The students were given a fun certificate for successfully creating a sentence using correct punctuation and capital letters.

Week Nine: Wordless Picture Book, Co-Authors

On the first day, the writer revisited a sense of story, the author's craft, the title and the role of the illustrator. The classroom teacher distributed multiple copies of a wordless picture books, Walking In the Forest (Turkle, 1989). The concept and meaning of the word "collaborate" were introduced in an impromptu manner by the writer. The students were first given a short time to become familiar with the illustrations in their minds. The teacher recorded the story as the writer motivated the students to "collaborate" to use their creativity and imagination to create good story language. (The writer modeled an example of story language for the beginning, middle and ending of a story). Each student participated and spontaneously contributed to the story using their prior knowledge. The teacher reread the text to the students as decisions were made about the flow and text/illustration relationships. The students, the classroom teacher and the writer collabrated on the most applicable text for each picture.

On day two, the students reread "their story" (wordless picture book) to the classroom teacher. The students read "their" text typed by the teacher and (temporarily) tacked onto books. The students developed ownership as the group reread the story. On day three, the students were given a choice either to read "their" story or to allow the writer to read "their" story to them. The class asked the writer to read aloud for pleasure. The students were praised by the writer and the teacher for their creativity. The students were asked to begin formulating a personal short story in their minds using any topic. The students were encouraged to think like authors and illustrators.

Week 10: Book Talks and Ownership

On day one, the writer used shared reading and open ended questions to introduce a new trade book, A House for Hermit Crab (Carle, 1988) while revisiting one of the students' favorite authors, Eric Carle. At the same time, the SCUBA-D strategy, an ocean topic, sense of story, interactive vocabulary, a reader/ audience role, the author/ illustator's role, and the use of sight words were reviewed. Next, the writer read Aesop's Fables (Leach, 1997) for pleasure and to study a moral. Then on the board, the writer and the students brainstormed to spark ideas for students who had not begun to write.

On day two, the students and the classroom teacher discussed possible story topics again. The majority of the students began the process of drafting, editing, refining and rewriting. Some students were given more time to think.

On day three, the writer used shared reading to read The Grouchy Ladybug by Eric Carle (1996) for pleasure. Using expression, the students chorally echoed the Grouchy Ladybug's repetitious dialogue for pleasure. Volunteer students retold the story in sequence. Attention was drawn to the text and the illustrations as they changed in size during specific parts of the story. Next, the writer and the students played a spontaneous vocabulary "word bank" game briefly for review. The students rotated going to the media center and the SCUBA-D was revisited using unfamiliar books.

Week 11: Becoming an Author and an Illustrator

On day one, the writer continued to offer assistance to those students still needing help to draft, edit, or refine their stories and/or illustrations. Individual students or pair students practiced reading/rereading aloud new or familiar trade books to the classroom teacher. The teacher reminded the students to focus on expression, the title, and the author. On days two and three, the classroom teacher continued to assist the students in drafting, editing, and refining personal stories and colorful illustrations.

Week 12: Celebration and Culmination

On day one, the writer worked with the students to finalize recording (in their reading logs) all books read during the 12-week intervention (with or without their parent's help). The students made sure their reading logs and the stickers on the reading chart matched the number of books read. Peer tutors, cross-age tutors, and the writer assisted students still needing help in reading the number of books to achieve their goal for the pizza literacy celebration.

On day two, the writer asked (volunteer) student "authors" and "illustrators" to share their stories with the class. Then the writer read The Very Quiet Cricket (1990) by Eric Carle for pleasure. The students chorally echoed the repetitious part of the dialogue for enjoyment. On the board the students and the writer recalled all the activities accomplished during the intervention program and their favorite ones were discussed orally. On the board, the writer used a web to describe the students' personal feelings and thoughts concerning "reading." The writer logged the number of books read by each child on the board. Next, the students participated in helping the writer guess and calculate the total number of books read as a class. Last, the students voted on their favorite authors.

On the night of the literacy pizza dinner, the students joined in the fun of celebrating literacy with their parent(s), grandparent(s), and siblings. Each student received a certificate and a trophy for reading 50 or more books for the reading challenge. In addition, each student received a new trade book, fun pencil, and book marker along with recognition from the teacher and the writer. The principal and the assistant principal also attended and gave the students additional individual recognition. A table with the students' art and stories during the 12-week implemention was displayed. Parents were given the time to read the stories, look at the illustrations and study the flip books. The writer/teacher informed the parents that the students had been reading in front of the class confidently. In addition, a photo album from the beginning parent/teacher meeting to the present was displayed for the students to show their guests. The students were also encouraged to read their new tradebook to parent(s), grandparent(s), or siblings at their tables.

Following the 12-week implementation program, the students were posttested using the Brocato Reading/Concept Survey, the Brocato Simple Fluency Stages Checklist and the SORT-R. These results were shared with the reading specialist, the principal, the assistant principal, the classroom teacher, the students and parent(s). The writer will be available to answer any questions as the need arises.

Timeline

Week	Activities
Three to Six Months Prior	Requested permission from district and administration. Consulted reading specialist and surveyed teachers. Analyzed data and chose target group. Consulted with classroom teacher.
One to Two Weeks Prior	Pretested students with formal and informal assessments. Sent letters home to parents regarding meeting. Set up print rich classroom with classroom teacher.
One	Read trade books to students for pleasure and vocabulary. Related students' personal experiences and role-played. Discussed project with students and met with parents.
Two	Read and reread predictable big books using shared reading. Modeled a sense of story and the author's craft for students. Used interactive vocabulary, context clues, and word banks.
Three	Read and reread poem using read aloud and echo reading. Used choral reading and contextualized phonics skills. Created flip books and played games as phonics review.
Four	Used author's books to highlight his/her style and craft. Allowed students to read independently for pleasure. Played games to revisit lessons and assess students.
Five	Encouraged students to relate personal experiences. Used words from recipes to review sight words. Gave students an opportunity to apply knowledge learned.
Six	Reviewed with books and games for mid-point assessment. Gave students a "voice" in evaluating the intervention. Used oral reading to promote student confidence.
Seven	Correlated a scuba diver's goal to students' (reading) goals. Connected the program using the SCUBA-D strategy.

Eight	Used read alouds to peak students' interest and response. Compared and contrasted two books with Venn diagram. Wrote a sentence about a story for meaning.
Nine	Collaborated to write story text for wordless picture book. Read, reread, typed story text individually and as a class. Began writing creative short story with illustrations.
10	Continued writing story with illustrations and read to class. Updated word banks and played games to assess learning. Talked about favorite books and read independently.
11	Continued to edit draft, refine and rewrite short story. Self-selected trade books to read aloud to teacher. Organized small group activities for students' enjoyment.
12	Concluded students' recording of books in reading logs. Read stories and webbed students' attitude about reading. Rewarded students' achievements at literacy celebration.
Post Implementation Period	Posttested students on attitude, fluency and oral reading. Discussed value of program with administration and faculty.

CHAPTER IV

Results

In this chapter, the results of the 12-week reading program will be discussed. The three formal objectives will be addressed as will anecdotal results. While the study initially targeted 24 third and fourth grade students with weak reading skills, only 23 actually participated in the program. Of the original 24 students, two students moved several months before the project began, and one student moved during the first week of implementation. Two new students were added to the program because they joined the class in time to be pretested. Another new student was not officially included in the program because he joined the class during the tenth week of implementation.

The first objective targeted was that after a 12-week intervention program, at least 18 of the 23 targeted third/fourth grade students would demonstrate an increase in their positive attitude towards reading by scoring at least an average of 3.5 on a-point Likert-style writer created reading attitude/concept inventory. The following table illustrates that 23 of 23 students scored at least 3.5 on a 5-point Likert scale (See Table 6:111). This objective was met. However, 15 of 23 students scored higher than 3.5 on the pre-test initially. The writer believes that this was partially due to the continuous progress model in which the students were grouped by abilities and skills. In this atmosphere, students with weak reading skills were more inclined to feel good about themselves as readers.

Table 6

Pre and Post Test on Student Attitude/Concept as a Reader Survey

Student	Grade	Pretest	Posttest	+/- Levels
A **	3	3.90	4.20	+.30
B *	3	3.60	3.65	+.05
C **	3	4.05	4.35	+.30
D	3	3.45	4.25	+.80
E **	3	3.15	4.20	+1.05
F	3	3.70	4.20	+.50
G **	3	3.90	3.65	-.25
H **	3	3.75	4.40	+.65
I **	3	3.60	4.00	+.40
J ***	3	-	-	-
K ***	3	-	-	-
L	3	3.80	4.20	+.40
M	3	4.00	4.40	+.40
N	3	3.20	3.80	+.60
O **	4	3.30	3.70	+.40
P *****	3	3.40	4.05	+.65
Q	4	3.35	4.05	+.70
R	4	3.45	4.15	+.70
S	4	4.60	4.35	-.25
T	4	4.75	4.50	-.25
U ***	4	-	-	-
V	4	2.90	4.05	+1.15
W	4	3.95	4.10	+.15
X **	4	3.65	3.95	+.30
Y ****	3	3.60	3.65	+.05
Z ****	3	3.55	4.40	+.85

* Educable Mentally Handicapped **Specific Learning Disabled ***Moved ****New *****Retained in third grade

The previous table demonstrates that 20 of 23 students increased their positive attitude from pretest to posttest on the attitude survey. Three of the 23 students demonstrated a decrease in their attitude. The writer was puzzled because these students were determined readers who displayed a very positive attitude during the intervention program. The writer feels that possibly on the posttest survey these students chose "often" instead of "always" because they realized that "always" was a much stronger word. These students may have been more conscious of word meanings after the intervention.

The second objective of the 12-week program was for at least 18 of the 23 targeted third/fourth grade students to increase their fluency in reading by at least one level as measured by the Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist (created by this writer). The results demonstrated that one of the 23 third and fourth grade students increased their reading fluency by one level, eight of 23 increased their reading fluency by two levels, nine of 23 increased their reading fluency by three levels, and five of 23 increased their reading fluency by four levels (See Table 7: 113). This objective was met.

In the following table, the Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist is divided into six approximate levels of reading fluency beginning with level #1 (F) and progessing through level #6 (T). As the student increases in reading fluency, he/she progresses to the next level until they master the skill of reading with expression, punctuation and for meaning.

Table 7

Pre and Post Test on Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist

Student		Grade	Pretest	Posttest	+/- Levels
A	**	3	L	E	+2
B	*	3	L	N	+3
C	**	3	E	T	+2
D		3	L	T	+4
E	**	3	L	N	+3
F		3	E	T	+2
G	**	3	L	T	+4
H	**	3	L	T	+4
I	**	3	U	T	+3
J	***	3	-	-	-
K	***	3	-	-	-
L		3	L	T	+4
M		3	U	T	+3
N		3	U	N	+2
O	**	4	L	E	+2
P	*****	3	E	T	+2
Q		4	L	N	+3
R		4	U	T	+3
S		4	N	T	+1
T		4	E	T	+2
U	***	4	-	-	-
V		4	U	T	+3
W		4	U	T	+3
X	**	4	L	T	+4
Y	****	3	U	T	+3
Z	****	3	E	T	+2

*Educable Mentally Handicapped **Specific Learning Disabled ***Moved ****New *****Retained in third grade

The explanation of the Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist is as follows: #1 (F) First the child reads one word at a time, most of the time. The child's focus is on decoding words and/or details of print; #2 (L) Language increases as the child reads two or three words most of the time. The focus is on decoding words and/or details of print. Reading is labored. #3 (U) Uses "word calling" to read groups of words. The focus is still on decoding words and/or details of print. There may be incorrect phrasing with no flow; #4 (E) Emerges from reading groups of words to complete sentences. The child is learning to read with expression and an awareness of punctuation most of the time; #5 (N) Now the child is able to read sentences in a paragraph form using expression and punctuation. Reading may be still somewhat choppy. Reading for meaning is increasing; and #6 (T) Tremendous progress in reading is demonstrated. The child selects and reads a trade book or narrative text (on their reading level) fluently with expression, punctuation awareness, and of meaning.

The third objective of the 12-week intervention program was for at least 18 of the 23 targeted third/fourth grade students to increase their oral reading skills by at least six months as measured by the Slosson Oral Reading Test-Revised (SORT-R). The SORT-R contains 200 words which the subject reads aloud. The selection of these words came from several sources, such as other tests, word lists prepared by reading experts, textbooks used for the teaching of reading in schools, and curriculum guides. Selection of these words is important so that each word is in the proper order of ascending difficulty. The number of words helps to improve the content validity of the SORT-R. The SORT-R's validity for the correlation with the Woodcock-Johnson Letter Word Identification is .92. The correlation with the Peabody Individual Achievement Test Reading Recognition is .90. Based on the above correlations, the SORT-R does have good criterion concurrent validity. In addition, confidence intervals of 95 percent and 99 percent have been established by grade and age level. The SORT-R has been standardized on over 1,000 subjects across 30 states.

The SORT-R's Split-Half Spearman-Brown reliability is .95 and above, depending on age. The reliability of the SORT-R using The Rulon Reliability is .95 and above, depending on age and for the Kuder-Richardson 21 it is .95 and above, depending on age. The test-retest after one week demonstrates reliabilities of .95 and above, depending on age. Such high reliability coefficients show the SORT-R can be used at frequent intervals to measure an individual's reading ability.

The results of the SORT-R demonstrated that one of 23 students increased their oral reading skills by two months, five of 23 students increased their oral reading skills by four months, five of 23 increased their skills by five months, two of 23 increased by six months, four of 23 increased by seven months, one of 23 increased by eight months, two of 23 increased by nine months, two of 23 increased by one year, and one increased by one year and one month (See Table 8: 116). Overall, 12 of 23 increased their reading by at least six months. This objective was not met. However, all students made significant gains during the three month intervention.

Table 8

Pre and Post Test Grade Level on Slosson Oral Reading Test/Revised

Student	Grade	Pretest	Posttest	+/- Levels
A **	3	1.2	1.6	+0.4
B *	3	1.6	2.2	+0.6
C **	3	2.0	2.8	+0.8
D	3	1.7	2.8	+1.1
E **	3	1.1	1.8	+0.7
F	3	3.2	3.7	+0.5
G **	3	2.7	3.2	+0.5
H **	3	2.1	2.5	+0.4
I **	3	2.2	3.1	+0.9
J ***	3	-	-	-
K ***	3	-	-	-
L	3	2.7	3.2	+0.5
M	3	2.7	3.3	+0.6
N	3	2.6	2.8	+0.2
O **	4	1.1	1.5	+0.4
P *****	3	4.1	4.6	+0.5
Q	4	3.2	3.6	+0.4
R	4	3.4	4.3	+0.9
S	4	4.1	4.8	+0.7
T	4	3.6	4.3	+0.7
U ***	4	-	-	-
V	4	5.4	6.4	+1.0
W	4	2.5	3.5	+1.0
X **	4	2.1	2.6	+0.5
Y ****	3	2.2	2.9	+0.7
Z ****	3	7.2	7.6	+0.4

*Educable Mentally Handicapped **Specific Learning Disabled *** Moved
****New *****Retained in the third grade

The following information affected the program's level of success and/or were unexpected events that occurred during implemention. First, the number of Specific Learning Disabled students actually tested and staffed increased before implemention. The number increased from four to eight students (two of these students were not officially staffed at the time the program began). Of the original class of 24 students (before implementation), three students moved. Two new students entered just before the program started. When one new third grade student was pre-tested by the writer before implementation, his score was above third grade level (7.2) according to the Slosson Oral Reading Test- Revised. This student had not been tested by the school for any specific programs at the time of implementation. He was placed in the targeted class from another (higher) level because the class was smaller and to help with his occasional emotional outbursts of anger, tantums, or crying. This student remained shy to read his own work, but loved to read to the class or demonstrate his excellent word identification or recognition skills. He read 68 books for the reading challenge. He learned to accept praise from the teacher and the writer. He learned to deal more effectively with situations that frustrated him previously. He thrived in a community atmosphere of acceptance. His maturity level increased as indicated by his volunteering to tell the writer that he had been disruptive along with his friend, even though he would miss some free play time as a consequence. He was taking responsibility for his behavior.

Another below-grade level student entered the program around the tenth week of intervention. He became excited about the reading challenge from the enthusiam of other students and requested permission to participate in the reading challenge. At the end of the 12-weeks, he had read 50 books and received rewards also. He also requested time to read and test with the writer as the other students were being posttested.

During the first week of implementation (before the parent meeting), the writer suggested that the teacher create a "Treasury of Reading" trunk for the students to purchase inexpensive trade books. The writer felt that since so many parents worked or were busy, a "bookstore" created in the classroom would help parents provide a literacy support in the home. The night of the parent meeting, eight of the 11 parents contributed a dollar (cost of book) for their child to purchase a book when the "store" was ready. The writer also suggested that a gift (trade book and fun pad purchased by the teacher) be given to each child whose parent(s) attended. This idea was conveyed to the parents through a collaborative letter sent home which also piqued the parents' curiosity through "there's something new happening in the classroom". The teacher indicated that the meeting was successful. Previously only one parent had attended an open house. The next day, the teacher purchased material and created a Treasury of Reading Trunk. All students participated and 54 "store" books were purchased during the 12-week intervention.

The writer brought personal Highlight Magazines into the classroom during the first week of intervention. The students enjoyed the magazine immensely. The teacher began subscribing to the magazine during the fifth week of intervention.

An unexpected event that took place during implementation (approximately half way through) was that the students desired to continue reading with the writer after class, during their lunch break. The writer began going back into the classroom the last 15 minutes of their lunch period to read with the students. First it was "Girls Day" because the idea was first suggested by two girls, and then it was "Boys Day." Every student came at least once and enjoyed the extra attention and praise. In addition, the students enjoyed playing with the bean bag puppets/ prompts while reading to the writer, in pairs or independently.

The classroom teacher was a major supporter of the reading challenge and the 12-week program. This supportive attitude was important to the success of the intervention. The teacher suggested the challenge be called "Think 50." She created reminder cards that read "Think 50" for the children to post on bulletin boards, mirrors and refrigerators in their homes. She purchased the books for the "store" at discount stores. She selected the trophies for the awards ceremony and printed the reading certificates. She worked hard to assure success for the project and her students.

Prior to implementation, a school wide program was started to encourage students to read. Each student was allowed to read outdoors after lunch with a para-professional. Only half of the class was participating in this venture. At the beginning of implementation, the students were encouraged by the writer and the teacher to read towards their "Think 50" reading challenge. All 23 students selected books to read each day with much enthusiasm during the entire 12-week implementation. In addition, during a long bus ride to a field trip, the students were encouraged by the teacher to bring a book to read. The writer also encouraged the parents to put a book into the student's Easter basket to encourage them to read over Spring Break. All of these books were recorded on the students' reading logs for the "Think 50" reading challenge. In addition to the reading challenge which encouraged and motivated students to read, more students began to record books in their reading logs consistently and confidently. The writer allowed time during the reading period for the students to record books in their logs read at school. Also, lists of books read at home were brought to the classroom signed by the parents. It was important to keep the reading chart updated. The teacher and the writer gave stickers to the students to put on the reading chart to maintain enthusiasm, a good attitude, and motivation for the reading challenge. The teacher indicated that keeping the reading logs updated was not consistently done by the children before implementation. After implementation, the teacher was glad that the logs had continually been updated and were ready (except for a few exceptions) to be submitted to the principal and the school district. In addition, the teacher indicated that a sample of writing was required to be placed in the students' portfolio. The students' stories and illustrations created during the 12-week project were used to meet this school and district requirement.

A rewarding development that occurred during implementation was a student who became the "leader/motivator" of the reading challenge (from about the mid point of intervention). His parents indicated that he would read books after everyone went to bed. They would notice his light on in his room until late at night. At the end of the 12-week implementation, he had read 133 books. He had also encouraged other students to read more than the 50 books required. The most rewarding part of his motivation (to the teacher and the writer) was his willingness to help tutor a student who was still struggling to read 50 books. The student leader spent some of his free play time and lunch time (along with the writer) helping another student achieve his goal. At the pizza celebration, the teacher/writer recognized his character and supportive community reader attitude by rewarding him with a toy store gift certificate.

An unforseen event occured the last two days of the program and the award's dinner. The teacher informed the writer (during the scheduled reading period) that several students (two SLD students, one EMH, and two who were below-grade level readers) had not read all of their 50 books. Three of these students still needed from 24 to 32 books to accomplish their goal. This indicated that the home reading logs were difficult for these students to maintain, these students were not receiving help at home, and/or these students were not as motivated out of school. These students selected books and read with the writer (and at times a cross-age tutor) the entire afternoon until school was over. None of the students complained, but were challenged and determined to stay on target with their goal. These students enjoyed watching the number of books they needed to read decrease on the board. The next day, only two students (one EMH) still needed to read books to accomplish their goal. The teacher arranged for the writer to teach the class from the reading period to the end of school. The substutite teacher read with the two students still needing help in the library until lunch time. Then the one student still needing help was tutored by a cross-age student. All of the other students completed their reading goals at home.

In addition, many of these students on the night of the awards expressed amazement for their accomplishment in reaching their reading goal. The students indicated that they had received an award/trophy for skating and/or baseball, but never for reading books. The students who had just completed their reading goals were appreciative that they were a part of the praise and success also.

The writer was pleased at how successful and enjoyable the interactive vocabulary was in helping these below-grade level students construct meaning. The students could remember words in their "word banks" because the words were contextualized not isolated. For example, the students would demonstrate with a motion of their hands the word "swooped" taken from a story read during the beginning of implementation. The students also recognized and remembered the meanings of their "word bank" vocabularies when familiar words were found in new stories.

The classroom teacher summarized her thoughts of the success of the 12-week intervention by indicating that as a classroom teacher she felt fortunate to have encountered and been included in this intervention project that changed the lives of many students. She indicated that not only had her attitude changed, so had that of the students, parents, and fellow teachers who witnessed the success.

The students were asked on the last day of implemention to give a one word or short reply to what reading is to them. The writer webbed their responses (some were duplicate): "The Best!" "Easy!" "Awesome!" " Fun!" "Educational!" "Great!" "Fantastic!" "Cool!" "Important!" "The Road to Success!" "Good!" "Ten times better than free play!" "Enjoyable!" and "Special!"

At the end of intervention, in an interactive group response discussion, the students were asked to tell their most enjoyable activities during the intervention, the following were given: "The Reading Challenge!" "The Egg Game!" "The Peter Rabbit video!" "The word bank!" "Reading books!" "The SCUBA-D Reader!" " Reading together!" "The word list (sight words)!" "Surprises for the SCUBA-D!" "The Scuba Diver!" "The Rice Krispies Treat!"

The school also benefited from the writer participating as a volunteer. The reading specialist/volunteer coordinator placed the writer in an official volunteer capacity from the first day of school. Therefore, every hour that the writer spent in writing or implementing the intervention proposal counted as volunteer hours toward the school to obtain awards. The writer was honored along with other volunteers at an appreciation breakfast. The writer received a volunteer pin and a certificate for 200+ hours contributed to the school. The writer was grateful for an opportunity to intern in this targeted school.

During the project, there were two negative events that the writer would have changed if possible. In the first week of intervention, during the Parent Meeting the students and their siblings were very noisy and disruptive as they played together. The parents, the teacher, and the writer would have been able to communicate more effectively if an older student had taken the children into another room to play games and/or read to them.

Another negative aspect of the project dealt with the noise from other rooms in the pod. The classroom was an open pod with two complete walls and two "open" partial walls. Interruptions or disruptions included students' noise from surrounding rooms, other students coming into the room during reading time to sharpen pencils, go to the restroom or wash their hands in the targeted room, along with students walking or talking in the hallway to or from class or lunch. In addition, other classrooms could hear the writer and the students' voices and responses which was disruptive at times to them, also.

During a post implementation discussion, the teacher indicated to the writer that the results of a classroom "end of the year" poll demonstrated that the students' favorite events were the awards dinner and the reading experience (fun activities). The subject that they voted on as their favorite was reading. She expressed her delight that the students could recall their knowledge of stories and vocabularies from the beginning of the intervention to the end.

Overall, the writer was excited that each student was successful in meeting his/her reading goal. This was evidenced by the fact that 23 below-grade level students read over 1400 books during the 12-week reading intervention program. This did not include the 68 books that the student who tested above grade level read. Each student's triumph gave much joy to the writer and the teacher.

Chapter V

Recommendations

After completion of the 12-week reading intervention project, a meeting will be set up to review the highlights of the program and the results with the principal, the assistant principal, two reading specialists, the classroom teacher, the Specific Learning Disabled teacher, and a school district representative. In addition, the writer will communicate with the parents of the 23 targeted students to share the positive impact the intervention had on their children. Since the writer believes strongly in the project, the results will be shared with any educator(s) who expresses an interest.

One change the writer would make in assessment would be to change to an informal test instead of a standardized test to measure oral reading growth. The writer chose the SORT-R for its high validity and reliablilty, in addition to its ease of administering and grading. The major drawback for using this test for this intervention process was the assessment (no matter how qualified) did not match the instruction. The writer spent numerous hours encouraging the students to take risks. The students were taught the SCUBA-D strategy and were encouraged to try all the reading strategies until the word made sense in the story or sentence.

When administering the SORT-R, there was no room for using the strategies as effectively as in a story or in text. With the SORT-R, there was a five second time limit to pronounce each word, self-corrections were not permitted and misprounciations did not count even if they were close. The major drawback was there was the lack of text support to create meaning. While all of the students succeeded in increasing their oral reading scores as evidenced by the SORT-R, the writer felt that the lowest (SLD) students did not feel confident while taking the test. The Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist and the running record would have been a good combination since they both use a trade book or narrative text. These two informal assessments would work well with all students, but especially those who are Specific Learning Disabled or Educable Mentally Handicapped.

Many of the elements used in this project could be administered by the classroom teacher, without a volunteer, after reading this practicum report. The writer suggests that the program be expanded throughout the entire school year. This program could be used by all kindergarten through intermediate teachers to develop strong independent readers. This would allow greater results in developing students' reading skills and love of literacy. The writer plans to use this project in a classroom setting in the next school year, either in a regular classroom or a classroom similar to the one in the targeted school.

It was interesting to note that the level of parental involvement was directly correlated to the level of success the students achieved. Parents need to be included in the program and given simple things to do to encourage reading at home. A meeting at the beginning of implementation is crucial to the success of the project to inform parents of ways to support literacy in the home. A team effort makes a more successful project. Parent(s) could also be trained to help in the classroom as volunteers to assist the classroom teacher in this project.

If this program is used in its entirety as a 12-week intervention program for weak readers, the teacher should be supported by a para-professional or volunteer. The teacher should instruct and the volunteer/para-professional should assist as needed. The writer would recommend a minimum of a three day schedule of intervention with a one hour time frame. If the instruction period is over an hour, the teacher should use interactive activities and games, high interest stories and students' oral or independent reading because the students can become unmotivated, restless and distruptive.

Students with weak reading skills usually have weak writing skills. A good example was the reading logs which were difficult for some students to maintain without the aid of the writer/teacher. The logs became time consuming. For best results, the teacher should oversee the book log entries until the students become confident. In using this project during the year, the writing aspect could be expanded to meet the needs and abilities of the students. The writing could be expanded to correlate with units and themes taught during the year. The writing could be expanded to include narrative and expository ideas. The students could work cooperatively in groups to compose stories and integrate art and music into the program for fun. In addition, modeling good literature helps to stimulate their creativity and develop their reading and writing confidence. Numerous opportunities to foster success with rewards and incentives should be used at all times.

The time of year of the implementation may have an effect on the outcome of the project. Typically at the end of the year, there are many distractions. It is recommended this project be implemented at the beginning of the school year for the maximum benefit of the students.

The project was written to work effectively inside the dynamics of a classroom situation, not as a "pull out" program. It was important that the students become a community of readers in this intervention. There were steps to accomplishing this postive outcome of the project. The students were encouraged to develop a love, appreciate and respect for literature. The writer was careful to instruct the students to value the trade books that were brought in from a personal collection. The students were also instructed to take care of the numerous inexpensive trade books (over 100) that the teacher/writer placed on a small book shelf to foster a print-rich environment. Then the students were instructed to give consideration to the "reader". Next, the writer emphasized that it was the responsibility of the "audience" to listen attentively to the "reader" because it took courage to read in front of a class. It was the responsibility of the "reader" to use good oral reading skills and not begin reading until everyone was quiet and attentive. As the writer and the teacher modeled a love, respect, and appreciation of literacy, the students began to develop their own love of literacy.

This project requires a lot of flexiblity and open mindedness on the part of the classroom teacher who must remain a teacher/researcher who keeps abreast of current methods based on sound research. This project uses a combination of approaches such as phonics (in a contextualized format not in isolation), interactive vocabulary, sight words, context clues, and a literature-based environment with hundreds of books. These approaches are unfamiliar to some teachers. The writer would encourage teachers to master one or two approaches and then proceed to another unfamiliar approach if the whole intervention is overwhelming. The excitement in the students as they enjoy literacy will be a great reward for stepping out.

The writer feels strongly that the trade book text should be predictable and repetitious at the beginning of the project. This will help the students develop confidence and ownership early and take risks to read (orally) in front of the room. Then the students will be willing to read books in the front of the room without predictable text. The students' self-confidence and self-esteem will be higher as they succeed step by step. The students will be willing to expand to chapter books more and more as their confidence increases.

Last, this intervention requires numerous books to stimulate the students' interest. In order to be cost effective and creative, the teacher needs to look at many different sources such as free books through clubs, garage sales, flea markets, and discount stores. The writer suggests that parents be recruited to help with a book drive. The more creative and resourceful a teacher is, the more an air of excitement will begin to spark the students' imagination.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Teacher Survey

Teacher Survey

Fall of 1997-98

Thank you for completing this survey. It will be used to find the most critical need in the area of reading. Research will be completed to be used in a practicum and to help targeted students. Data are needed to verify that these children have weak reading skills.

Appendix A

Brocato Teacher Survey

Name of teacher: ________________________________

Grade taught: ______________ Date: ______________

How long have you been a teacher at this school? _______
How long have you been in the teaching profession?_______

1. Approximately how many students in your class are reading below grade level?
____ out of ____ (Example: 15 out of 30)*
How many are getting outside assistance with this need?________

Read the following statements below regarding these below average readers and circle the response that best fits your belief about this problem.*
Based on your observation, parent conference, and other sources:

a. These students probably have not been read to or with consistently at home.*
strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

b. The curriculum does not fully meet these students' reading needs which restricts them from progressing at an average rate.*
strongly agree agree disagree
strongly disagree

c. One-on-one instruction would be helpful to these students. *
strongly agree agree disagree
strongly disagree

d. Their parents do not seem to give them one-on-one attention with reading on a consistent basis.*
strongly agree agree disagree
strongly disagree

*Used with permission Collier, 1995, p. 91.

e. What other factors do you feel may be contributing to these children's weak reading skills?

____

____

____

f. Which of the following areas do you feel would be in building reading fluency in your below average readers? Please circle only one:

1. Practice with sight-word vocabulary
2. Improving phonics skills
3. Work with context clues
4. Combination of strategies
5. Other (Please specify)________________________

(Please feel free to explain your choice.)____

____

____

g. Have you had any special training in working with students with weak reading skills?

Yes____ No____

If yes, to what degree do you feel this special training is helping you? (Please circle one.)

(Lowest) 1 2 3 4 5 (Highest)

h.. I am open to assistance in helping these children with reading needs.

Yes__ No___

I. Please list the name. grade, reading level, etc. for your below grade level readers. (Information data may come from either formal or informal assessments such as running records, etc.)

Fall 1997 - 1998

	Name of Student	Current Grade	Reading Level	Grade Equivalent	Assessment Tool Used
A.					
B.					
C.					
D.					
E.					
F.					
G.					
H.					
I.					
J.					
K.					
L.					
M.					
N.					
O.					
P.					
Q.					

R.

S.

T.

U.

V.

W.

X.

Y.

Z.

I would like to also say

Thank you again.

Appendix B

Brocato Student Attitude/Concept Survey

Appendix B

Brocato Student Attitude/Concept Survey

The teacher should instruct each student individually by saying: "Circle the number that matches your feelings and your attitudes about reading. You can be honest about how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers because these are your personal feelings. This is not a test." (The teacher should review the rating scale terms with the child to make sure there is a clear understanding of never, seldom, sometimes, often and always.) Note: It is at the teacher's discretion whether to circle answers for the child as the child responds to each question.

A. I _________ see myself as a good reader.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

B. I ___________ feel that reading is a difficult thing to do.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

C. I _________ read a book for fun.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

D. I _______feel that my best friend thinks that I am a good reader.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5.always

E. I _________feel that my classmates think that I am a good reader.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

F. In my free time, I ________ enjoy reading for fun.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

G. I feel that my teacher ________thinks that I am a good reader.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

H. I am __________ interested in the books that my teacher reads to me.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5.always

I. At home, I ________________see my parents read.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

J. I feel my skills as a reader are_____________ enough to help me read.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

K. My parents _________________read to me.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

L. I _______feel confident that my parent(s) could help me improve my reading.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

M. I _______feel confident that my teacher(s) could help me improve my reading.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

N. I _______ choose my own books
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4.often 5.always

O. I _________ know what to do when I come to an unknown word..
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

P. I _______ receive books as gifts from my family and friends.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

Q. When I grow up, I will _______use reading in my job and/or as a parent.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

R. I _________talk to my friends or my family about books.
1. never 2. seldom 3.sometimes 4.often 5.always

S. I ________ feel that the library is a wonderful place to visit.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

T. I ________ believe that I can improve my reading.
1. never 2. seldom 3. sometimes 4. often 5. always

For teacher information only:
I would like for you to name up to five books and their authors that you have read recently.

1. ____________________________________

2. ____________________________________

3. ____________________________________

4. ____________________________________

5. ____________________________________

If I were to read to you in class, tell me three of your favorite subjects or things that you would want to hear about?

1. ____________________________________

2. ____________________________________

3. ____________________________________

Name ____________________

Pretest Date ____________________

Posttest Date ____________________

Grade ____________________

Tested by ____________________

Appendix C

Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist

Appendix C

Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist

Stages to becoming a fluent reader:

F #1 First the child reads one word at a time most of the time. Focus is on decoding words and/or details of print.

L #2 Language increases as the child reads two to three words most of the time. Focus is on decoding words and/or details of print. Labored reading.

U #3 Uses "word calling" to read groups of words. Focus is still on decoding words and/or details of print. Incorrect phrasing with no flow.

E #4 Emerges from reading groups of words to complete sentences. Learning to flow with expression and an awareness of punctuation most of the time.

N #5 Now able to read sentences in a paragraph form using expression and punctuation. Still somewhat choppy. Meaning is increasing.

T #6 Tremendous progress in reading. The child reads a trade book or narrative text fluently with expression, punctuation and for meaning.

Instructions for using the Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist:

The child selects (with the teacher's help only if necessary) a trade book or any high interest narrative text that is on their reading level. The teacher could use the Slosson SORT- R (a formal assessment tool), a Running Record or an Informal Reading Inventory (informal assessment tools) to evaluate the child's current reading level as a starting point.

The teacher observes and listens to the child during reading time, in small or large groups or during individual conferencing. The teacher pinpoints the approximate stage that represents the child's fluency stage each time the checklist is used. The teacher also observes, records, and monitors each child's areas of strengths. In addition, the teacher recognizes the child's reading needs and plans for individual, corrective and/or reinforcing instruction. The teacher's (dated) assessment notes are the most vital aspect of this simple checklist. The teacher should note strategies, skills and relevant literature that would motivate the child and increase his/her level of reading fluency. In addition, a love for reading should be modeled as the teacher prompts each individual child toward becoming a fluent reader.

The Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist could be used creatively by any teacher as often as possible (once a week, once a month, or every quarter to assess the child). It could be placed in a literacy folder, records, portfolio, etc. This simple form could be used to demonstrate each child's progress or current needs during parent/teacher conferences and/or consultations with the reading specialist. (The form may copied as often as needed.)

Brocato Simple Fluency Checklist

Name of Student:____________________ Date:_____________________

Grade_____ Reading Level_____ Book Read________________________

F #1 First the child reads one word at a time most of the time. Focus is on decoding words and/or details of print.

L #2 Language increases as the child reads two to three words most of the time. Focus is on decoding words and/or details of print. Labored reading

---

U #3 Uses "word calling" to read groups of words. Focus is still on decoding words and/or details or print. Incorrect phrasing with no flow.

E #4 Emerges from reading groups of words to complete sentences. Learning to flow with expression and an awareness of punctuation most of the time.

N #5 Now able to read sentences in a paragraph form using expression and punctuation. Still somewhat choppy. Meaning is increasing.

T #6 Tremendous progress in reading. The child reads a trade book or narrative text fluently with expression, punctuation and for meaning.

Appendix D

Principal Permission Letter

Appendix D

Principal Permission Letter

September 4, 1997

Linda N. Brocato

Mrs. Ginny Yanson
Principal
Quail Hollow Elementary School
7050 Quail Hollow Boulevard
Wesley Chapel, Florida 33544

Dear Mrs. Yanson:

I am writing to request permission to intern in Quail Hollow Elementary School. I would like permission to begin writing a proposal in the fall of 1997 and implementing it in the spring of 1998.

The following describes what I am required to do as a student of Nova Southeastern University, Graduate Teacher Education Program (GTEP) for the proposal:

1. Use the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) GTEP Practicum Internship research model in collaboration with an on-site mentor and an assigned NSU GTEP practicum advisor to identify an educational problem that exists in an elementary school and that addresses my chosen major area of study (reading) at the graduate level.
2. Collect statistical data to document the problem with an identified target group.
3. Review current relevant professional literature on theory and practice related to the specified problem.
4. Propose a solution to the problem that will be implemented with a specified target group in a minimum of 12 weeks.

5. Write and submit a practicum proposal to be given to my assigned NSU GTEP advisor.

My NSU advisor will approve and evaluate the completed proposal using the Practicum Proposal Evaluation Checklist and will grant subsequent permission for implementation to begin. The Practicum Office (NSU) faculty will provide an individualized narrative critique of the proposal with recommendations for preparation of the final report.

After proposal approval, I am required to do the following:

1. Conduct implementation of the planned school-improvement project for a period of not fewer than twelve weeks with the assistance of my advisor and observation by the on-site mentor.
2. Address all stated objectives during implementation, and
3. Keep a log of all activities in order to monitor, refine, and evaluate the implementation using proposal evaluation tools.

The on-site mentor will provide a brief narrative on the Project Verification Form regarding the impact of the implementation upon the target group. The mentor will evaluate my contribution to the school resulting from the project using a 5-point Likert scale opinionaire.

I am then required to:

1. Prepare a final report based upon the proposal that includes data collected during implementation, with advice of the practicum advisor.
2. Report on the results of posttesting; and
3. Make recommendations for ongoing use of the project in the same setting, as well as, provide advice for those wishing to replicate the project.

The NSU practicum advisor will evaluate my final report and rate the project using the Practicum Report Evaluation Form. The 5-point Likert scale instrument provides for evaluation of preparation of the documents, as well as, for evaluation of implementation procedures and outcomes. A grade of "Pass" or "Fail" will be assigned by the Practicum Office faculty after reading my final report and related documents prepared by all evaluators.

I believe that my personal involvement with a target group of students in Quail Hollow Elementary will be beneficial to them, as well as, to me. I have a desire to help children, especially those below grade level and at-risk, to love to read, as well as, learn to read.

I would like to personally thank you for your time. I can be reached at my home phone number, or the address on the front of the letter, should you need any clarification on anything I have proposed. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Linda N Brocato

Linda N. Brocato

I am in agreement with the above proposal and implementation process as described above:

9/4/97 Ginny Yanson

Date Mrs. Ginny Yanson, Principal of Quail Hollow Elementary School

Appendix E

Classroom Teacher Permission Letter

Appendix E

Classroom Teacher Permission Letter

November 14, 1997

Linda N. Brocato

Mrs. Pat Turcotte
Teacher
7050 Quail Hollow Elementary School
Wesley Chapel, Florida 33544

Dear Mrs. Turcotte,

I am requesting permission to intern in your classroom. According to the teacher survey that you filled out November 4, 1997, you have a classroom of 24 students reading below-grade level. Also, according to the survey you are open to assistance with these third and fourth grade students. I would be interested in an opportunity to assist you in helping to develop these students' reading skills. I would intern in your classroom as a volunteer. I would be flexible to work with your students' schedules to implement the 12-week reading intervention program.

The following describes what I am required to do as a student of Nova Southeastern University, Graduate Teacher Education Program (GTEP) for the proposal before implementation:

1. Use the Nova Southeastern University (NSU) GTEP Practicum Internship research model in collaboration with an on-site mentor (Jane Comer-Reading Specialist at Quail Hollow Elementary School) and an assigned NSU GTEP practicum advisor to identify an educational problem that exists in an elementary school and that addresses my chosen major area of study (reading) at the graduate level.
2. Collect statistical data to document the problem with an identified target group (your class).

3. Review current relevant professional literature on theory and practice related to the specified problem.

4. Propose a solution to the problem that will be implemented in your classroom of 24 third and fourth grade students in a mimimum of 12 weeks.

5. Write and submit a practicum proposal to be given to my assigned NSU GTEP advisor.

My NSU advisor will approve and evaluate the completed proposal using the Practicum Proposal Evaluation Checklist and will grant subsequent permission for implementation to begin. The Practicum Office (NSU) faculty will provide an individualized narrative critique of the proposal with recommendations for preparation of the final report.

After proposal approval, I am required to do the following:

1. Conduct implementation of the planned school-improvement project for a period of not fewer than twelve weeks with the assistance of my advisor and observation by the on-site mentor.

2. Address all stated objectives during implementation, and

3. Keep a log of all activities in order to monitor, refine, and evaluate the implementation using proposal evaluation tools.

The on-site mentor will provide a brief narrative on the Project Verification Form regarding the impact of the implementation upon the target group. The mentor will evaluate my contribution to the school resulting from the project using a 5-point Likert scale opinionaire.

I am then required to:

1. Prepare a final report based upon the proposal that includes data collected during implementation, with advice of the practicum advisor.

2. Report on the results of posttesting; and

3. Make recommendations for ongoing use of the project in the same setting, as well as, provide advice for those wishing to replicate the project.

The NSU practicum advisor will evaluate my final report and rate the project using the Practicum Report Evaluation Form. The 5-point Likert scale instrument provides for evaluation of preparation of the documents, as well as, for evaluation of implementation procedures and outcomes. A grade of "Pass" or "Fail" will be assigned by the Practicum Office faculty after reading my final report and related documents prepared by all evaluators.

I believe that my personal involvement with your students in Quail Hollow Elementary School will be beneficial to them, as well as, to me. I have a desire to help children, especially those below grade level or at-risk, to love to read, as well as, learn to read.

I would like to personally thank you for your time and willingness to allow me to assist you in your classroom. I can be reached at my home phone number, (813) , or the address on the front of the letter, should you need any clarification on anything I have proposed. I look forward to consulting with you from time to time before implementing the proposal.

Sincerely,

Linda N. Brocato

Linda N. Brocato

I am in agreement with the above proposal and implementation process as described above:

Nov. 16, 1997 Pat Turcotte

Date Pat Turcotte, Teacher at Quail Hollow Elementary School

Appendix F

Parents Permission Letter

Appendix F
Parents Permission Letter

Dear Parent(s),

My name is Mrs. Brocato and I will be completing a Masters Degree in Reading in June (1998). I am writing to inform you of a wonderful opportunity for both your child and myself. Mrs. Turcotte has agreed to allow me to work with your child in the classroom during the reading period. I will teach reading strategies that will give your child more confidence in reading. I will work with the class as a volunteer, three days a week. I will be in the classroom for one to two hours per day. I have a desire to help your child improve his/her reading skills and to love to read.

The school district and the principal of Quail Hollow Elementary School have approved of my assisting Mrs Turcotte. We believe a team effort will result in progress in your child's reading ability.

I am excited to work with your child and grateful for an opportunity to help Mrs. Turcotte. If you have any questions please call me at will be glad to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Linda N. Brocato

Mrs. Linda N. Brocato

I am giving Mrs. Brocato permission to help my child in reading. Mrs. Brocato may test my child before and after the 12- week reading program to evaluate my child's progrss in reading. I understand that my child's name will be kept confidential at all times. Therefore, I grant permission to use my child's progress results.

Parent(s) Name________________________________

Telephone Number______________________________

Appendix G

Collier Permission Letter

Appendix G

Collier Permission Letter

Feb. 24, 1998

To Whom It May Concern:

I, Janet C. Collier, grant permission to Linda Brocato to use any portion of my Teacher Survey included in my Nova practicum titled "Using Cross-Age Tutoring to Improve Reading Comprehension Skills in Elementary Language Arts Students.

Sincerely,

Janet C Collier

Janet C. Collier

Appendix H

Brocato Interactive Egg Game

Appendix H

Brocato Interactive Egg Game

THE BROCATO INTERACTIVE EGG GAME:

FIRST, THE TEACHER SEPARATES THE NUMBERED ACTIVITIES BY CUTTING EACH ACTIVITY INTO STRIPS. THEN THE ACTVITY STRIPS ARE FOLDED. NEXT, EACH ACTIVITY STRIP IS PLACED IN A COLORFUL PLASTIC EGG. THEN THE EGGS ARE CLOSED AND PLACED IN A BOX OR A BASKET. THE GAME BEGINS AS THE TEACHER ALLOWS EACH STUDENT TO SELECT AN EGG. NEXT, THE STUDENT OPENS THE EGG AND READS THE ACTIVITY STRIP TO THE CLASS. EACH STUDENT RESPONDS TO THE "SURPRISE" REQUEST BY DOING THE ACTIVITY.

1. GO TO THE BOARD AND WRITE ALL THE WORDS THAT YOU REMEMBER THAT START WITH THE BEGINNING LETTER " S" FROM OUR STORIES OR FROM YOUR MEMORY. READ THEM TO US.

2. GO TO THE BOARD AND WRITE ALL THE WORDS THAT YOU KNOW THAT RHYME WITH RICE AND BOOK. WHAT CHANGED IN THE WORDS AND WHAT STAYED THE SAME?

3. GO TO THE RAINBOW FISH BOOK AND READ THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY TO THE CLASS. NOW READ THE ENDING OF THE BOOK TO THE CLASS.

4. STOP AND LOOK AROUND: WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THE ROOM THAT REMINDS YOU OF ALL THAT WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON IN READING? TELL THE CLASS ONE THING THAT HAS HELPED YOU WITH YOUR READING SO FAR.

5. STOP AND LOOK AT THE WALL WITH THE ILLUSTRATIONS THAT WERE DONE BY YOU AND YOUR CLASS. WHY ARE ILLUSTRATIONS IMPORTANT IN A BOOK OR A STORY? CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE STORY THAT YOU ILLUSTRATED?

6. NAME THREE DEPOSITS YOU MADE INTO YOUR WORD BANK FROM THE BOOK THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF VIRTUES. DO YOU REMEMBER THE STORY THAT WAS READ ABOUT A KING AND HIS PET HAWK? TELL THE CLASS WHAT THE WORDS MEAN AND MAKE A SENTENCE WITH EACH WORD.

7. NAME THREE DEPOSITS YOU MADE INTO YOUR WORD BANK FROM THE STORY, THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT. TELL THE CLASS WHAT THE WORDS MEAN AND MAKE A SENTENCE WITH EACH WORD.

8. NAME THREE WORDS THAT YOU REMEMBER FROM THE STORY, THE RAINBOW FISH. TELL THE CLASS WHAT YOU THINK THEY MEAN AND MAKE A SENTENCE WITH EACH.

9. FIND THE POEM "I ASKED A TIGER TO TEA" IN THE ROOM. READ IT WITH SO MUCH EXPRESSION THAT WE WILL THINK YOU ARE AN ACTOR.

10. TELL THE CLASS THREE DEPOSITS THAT YOU MADE IN YOUR WORD BANK FROM THE POEM, "I ASKED A TIGER TO TEA". WHAT ARE THE MEANINGS OF THE WORDS AND MAKE A SENTENCE WITH EACH WORD.

11. ROLE-PLAY (PRETEND) THAT YOU ARE PETER RABBIT AND YOU HAVE A BIG STOMACH ACHE FROM EATING ALL THE VEGETABLES IN MR. MCGREGOR'S GARDEN. THEN PRETEND THAT YOU ARE MR. MCGREGOR AND YOU JUST DISCOVERED PETER IN YOUR GARDEN. MAKE US BELIEVE YOU!

12. ROLE-PLAY (PRETEND) THAT YOU ARE GENGHIS KHAN AND HIS PET HAWK IS BEGINNING TO ANNOY HIM. WHAT DOES ANNOY MEAN? WHAT HAPPENED NEXT IN THE STORY? THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

13. TELL THE CLASS WHAT THE PLOT OF A STORY MEANS IN YOUR OWN WORDS. TELL THE CLASS THE PLOT IN THE STORY, THE VERY LONELY FIREFLY?

14. TELL THE CLASS ALL THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT ERIC CARLE, THE AUTHOR. NAME AT LEAST 4 BOOKS THAT HE WROTE.

15. THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR WAS SO ________? ROLE-PLAY THIS CATERPILLAR AND TELL THE CLASS AT LEAST FIVE (5) THINGS THAT HE ATE.

16. TELL THE CLASS ALL THE CHARACTERS IN THE STORY FROM THE VIDEO ON THE TALE OF PETER RABBIT. WHAT HAPPENED IN THE NEW STORY THAT WE DID NOT READ ABOUT? TELL THE CLASS HOW THE NEW STORY ENDED?

17. GOOD NIGHT OWL WAS ANOTHER STORY THAT YOU ENJOYED. FIND THE STORY AND REREAD IT TO THE CLASS WITH SO MUCH EXPRESSION THAT WE WILL THINK WE ARE AT THE MOVIES.

18. LOOK AT THE WORDS TELEGRAPH, TELEPHONE, TELEVISION, AND TELEGRAM. TELL THE CLASS WHAT IS ALIKE ABOUT THEM? YOU MAY WRITE THEM ON THE BOARD AND CIRCLE ALL THE LETTERS OR PARTS THAT ARE THE SAME. THINK OF OTHER WORDS THAT START OR BEGIN ALIKE.

19. YOU ARE THE TEACHER TODAY, TEACH THE CLASS TO RHYME WORDS LIKE WE DID WITH OUR FLIP BOOKS.

20. THE VERY BUSY SPIDER WAS ANOTHER FAVORITE BOOK. FIND THE BOOK AND READ THE PART THAT THE SPIDER KEPT SAYING OVER AND OVER. MAKE US BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE A VERY BUSY SPIDER.

21. WE READ DIFFERENT STORIES THAT HAD A "MORAL" IN THEM. TELL THE CLASS WHAT A MORAL MEANS? NOW NAME AT LEAST 3 STORIES THAT HAD A MORAL. WHAT WAS THE MORAL IN EACH STORY?

22. "TRY TRY AGAIN" WAS A __________ THAT I READ TO YOU. HINT: THE WORD IS ONE OF YOUR SPELLING WORDS. WHAT DOES THE WORD COURAGE MEAN TO YOU? NAME ONE PERSON WHO YOU KNOW HAS A LOT OF COURAGE. WHY DO YOU THINK SO?

22. TELL THE CLASS ABOUT ONE BOOK THAT YOU HAVE READ TOWARDS YOUR "THINK 50" PARTY AT THE END. REMEMBER ALL THE IMPORTANT THINGS TO FOCUS ON?

23. NAME THE IMPORTANT PARTS OF A STORY? USE A BOOK TO DESCRIBE AND TEACH US ABOUT THEM.

24. I WRITE BOOKS, STORIES AND POEMS. WHO AM I? I DRAW PICTURES AND COLOR THEM TO GO ALONG WITH THE STORIES, BOOKS AND POEMS. WHO AM I? TELL ME ABOUT BEATRIX POTTER'S LIFE AND WHY SHE WROTE STORIES.

25. FROM THE CHILDREN'S BOOK OF VIRTUES: THIS MAN WAS A FAMOUS PRESIDENT. HE GAVE SUGGESTIONS ON HOW TO ________ YOUR __________? HE SAID, "_____________________". IF GENGHIS KHAN IN THE STORY ABOUT A KING AND HIS PET HAWK HAD CONTROLLED HIS TEMPER, HIS______ WOULD NOT HAVE _________ .

26. FIND THE BOOK ABOUT THE RAINBOW FISH. TEACH THE CLASS HOW TO BE A DETECTIVE WHO FINDS CLUES ABOUT UNKNOWN WORDS IN THE STORY. SHOW US.

27. YOU ARE THE TEACHER AND I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HOW TO READ LONG WORDS. TEACH ME WHAT TO DO WHEN I FIND BIG WORDS LIKE FIREFLY, RAINBOW, TREEHOUSE, WORKBOOK, STORYBOOK. HOW ABOUT WORDS LIKE SLOWLY, QUICKLY, AND TIMELY?

28. IF YOU WERE READING A STORY AND YOU READ "IT'S THIS LAST EGG." SAID MOTHER DUCK. "IT HASN'T HATCHED YET." PRETEND THAT YOU DO NOT KNOW THE WORD "HATCHED". WHAT CLUES IN THE SENTENCES WOULD HELP YOU? HOW WOULD YOU BREAK THE WORD INTO SMALLER PARTS? TEACH THE CLASS.

29. WHAT IF YOU WERE READING A STORY AND YOU CAME TO THE PART, "WHEN HE'D BEEN WALKING A WHILE HE CAME TO A LARGE LAKE. THERE WERE SOME DUCKS SWIMMING ON IT." TEACH THE CLASS HOW TO READ THE WORD "SWIMMING" IF THEY DID NOT KNOW THE WORD. WHAT CLUES WOULD HELP?